XEROX

Xerox University Microfilms
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

WESTERN AMERICANA

[illegible]
[illegible]

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Reflections and Comments. 1865–1895.
12mo, $2.00.

PROBLEMS OF
MODERN DEMOCRACY

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ESSAYS

BY

EDWIN LAWRENCE GODKIN

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1896

H35
G6

Copyright, 1896, by
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

Trow Directory
Printing and Bookbinding Company
New York

CONTENTS

PAGE

Aristocratic Opinions of Democracy, ... 1
[North American Review, January, 1865.]

Popular Government, ... 68
[Nineteenth Century, February, 1886.]

Some Political and Social Aspects of the Tariff, . 98
[New Princeton Review, March, 1887.]

Criminal Politics, ... 123
[North American Review, June, 1890.]

"The Economic Man," 156
[North American Review, October, 1891.]

Idleness and Immorality, ... 180
[Forum, May, 1892.]

The Duty of Educated Men in a Democracy, . . 199
[Forum, March, 1894.]

Who will Pay the Bills of Socialism? . . . 225
[Forum, June, 1894.]

The Political Situation in 1896, ... 249
[Forum, May, 1896.]

The Real Problems of Democracy, ... 275
[Atlantic Monthly, July, 1896.]

The Expenditure of Rich Men, ... 311
[Scribner's Magazine, October, 1896.]

ARISTOCRATIC OPINIONS OF DEMOCRACY

THE controversy between the supporters of oligarchy and those of democracy, which has raged with greater or less heat ever since the middle of the last century, has drawn fresh vigor from the spectacle of the American war. Both sides have found in this great struggle, not only, to use the pulpit phrase, "an occasion to improve," but an endless supply of illustrations for the enforcement or elevation of their respective theories. The one sees, both in the causes of the struggle and in the manner in which it has been conducted, a series of conclusive proofs of the failure of popular government; the other finds in the incidents of each hour some new justification of its confidence in popular fortitude, honesty, and sagacity.

And the discussion has been exacerbated by the fact, that neither party has been a disinterested spectator of the contest. By the friends of democracy abroad, the convulsion through which the American commonwealth is passing is felt to be a crucial test of the soundness of those political opinions of which they have long been the champions, and with which their political fortunes are inseparably linked. To its friends in America it has come home as a personal calamity. It has either wasted their substance, or made their hearths desolate, or, which is often as hard to bear as either, it has inflicted lasting wounds on their pride. In the eyes of the party of aristocracy, too, it is not simply the political unity of the North American continent which is debated on Southern battle-fields, but the stability of their own order, the continuance of that form of social organization in which they have been bred, and with the security and perpetuation of which all that they hold precious in life is indissolubly connected. To them the defeat of the South signifies the triumph of that "principle of equality" from the spread of which they look not only for their own degradation, but, often honestly enough, for great danger to national liberty, and even to civilization itself.

And to appreciate thoroughly the intensity of the interest which this conflict of ours excites, we must keep in mind the width of the area over which its material consequences have been felt. There is no shore so distant that the waves of this great tempest have not broken on it. The term *orbis terrarum perturbatio*, which, as applied by

Cicero to the great civil war of his day, was but a rhetorical exaggeration, may be bestowed on this one with literal accuracy. The course of the great tides of commerce has been turned by it; the industry of whole nations has been revolutionized by it. From John O'Groat's to the base of the Great Snowy Range, there is no country to which its probable results, and probable duration, are not questions of tremendous moment.

One result, for which students of political philosophy will be thankful, has flowed from the increased sharpness which the events of the day have lent to the discussion, and that is the clearness and frankness with which the opposing parties have been led to ennunciate their views. We doubt if the enemies of democracy ever before revealed their objections to it, and their anticipations as to its effects, with as much candor as since our war broke out. We now know, with a tolerable approach to exactness, what we did not know before, the kind of thing they believe it to be, and the kind and amount of evil they expect to proceed from its unchecked working. Excitement caused by the vicissitudes of the armed struggle has loosened the tongues of a great many men who were previously kept silent by caution or indolence, or from never having taken the trouble to put their conclusions into shape. When democracy was prosperous, many only shook their heads when it was mentioned who now make a clean breast of it, and tell the world in good set phrases what they have been thinking about it for years.

And, on the other hand, its friends have been roused by the same causes into more vigorous defence of it than they ever ventured on before. There are many persons in America to-day who five years ago looked grave over universal suffrage, or expressed private doubts of its success, but who are now to be found in the ranks of its most enthusiastic defenders, breathing defiance of aristocrats and aristocracy from every pore, and consigning every form of political organization in which power does not flow directly from the people, in yearly or biennial driblets, to unutterable failure and confusion.

There has, however, in our opinion, been one great mistake made by some advocates of the democratic cause in their manner of conducting the controversy. It consists in ascribing *all* the attacks which have been recently made on democratic institutions to aristocratic malignity, to a blind, perverse pride of caste, or to stupid, over-reasoning prejudice against our political and social organization simply because it is different from something else. There is no doubt, in England especially, a vast amount of ignorant depreciation of democracy by persons who have no better reasons for objecting to it than a vague notion that it is vulgar, and a vast deal by others who hate it from the purely selfish consideration of the probable effect of its spread on their own social position or that of their families, or from the apprehension that it would introduce changes in manners which their temperament and education lead them to regard as obnoxious.

But, in addition to these, democracy has had in this controversy a number of opponents—a small number, we admit—against whom we must employ better weapons than railing, whose character and arguments are both unquestionably respectable, and whose hostility to it is based on conclusions carefully formed, which are ennunciated, not certainly without feeling, but without rancor or irritation. They are thinkers who look on politics—ours as well as their own—in the clear white light of reason, and who, while differing from us as to the means of promoting it, share all our solicitude for the welfare of the human race. Nobody who has been familiar with the political literature of Europe for some years back, can have failed to perceive the struggle between their hopes and fears which shows itself whenever these men speak of democracy, the ill-disguised apprehension with which they concede that its march is now irresistible, and the nervous industry with which they occupy themselves in providing breaks and buffers to restrain or direct its course.

The opinions of this class of persons about democracy may, we think, be fairly summed up as follows. They think the spread of democracy (meaning thereby the ascendancy of "the principle of equality," to use M. de Tocqueville's phrase, both in politics and in society) over every Christian country, at least, to be certain at no very distant day. They believe that no precaution can be taken and no barrier created which will do more than postpone this result, and then for a very brief period. They think that this seems to be the remedy decreed by Providence for the removal of the great blot on our civilization, the physical misery and moral degradation of the lower classes. And they admit that the establishment of democracy, whether it take the shape of a republic or of a Cæsarean despotism, would doubtless be largely instrumental in securing for the bulk of the population a certain amount of coarse enjoyments, such as good shelter, good food, and good clothing, and a limited amount of education. But they hold that every democracy, however free at the period of its establishment, gravitates strongly toward subjection to a single absolute ruler, after a period of great corruption and disorder, and that it derives this tendency from certain inherent defects; and what these defects are, they fancy they are able to point out by an examination of what they see, or think they see, in the United States.

What they believe they learn about democracy from what they see here is, that it is fatal in the long run to any high degree of excellence in the arts, science, literature, or statesmanship; that it is hostile to every form of distinction, and thus tends to extinguish the nobler kinds of ambition, to create and perpetuate mediocrity, to offer a serious bar to progress, and even to threaten civilization with stagnation; that, by making equality of conditions the highest political good, it makes civil liberty appear valuable only so long or so far as its existence is compatible with equality; that it converts the ideal of the worst trained and most unthinking portion of the community into the national standard of capacity, and thus drives the ablest men out of public life; that it sets up mere success in the accumulation of money as the proof and test of national prosperity, and elevates material luxury into the great end of social progress; that it takes from manners all their grace and polish and dignity, makes literature feeble and tawdry, and oratory bombastic and violent; that it infuses bitterness into party struggles, while removing the barriers which in aristocratic societies soften and restrain its expression; and, finally, that, by the pains it takes to preserve the equality of conditions, it forces every member of the community to engage as soon as he reaches manhood in an eager scramble for wealth, thus rendering impossible the existence of a class with sufficient leisure to devote themselves to the cultivation of the arts and sciences, or to speculative inquiry in any field of knowledge.

We do not mean to say that all of the foregoing charges are brought against democracy by any one of its enemies, but the whole of them may be found in a very small number of the speeches, articles, and treatises of one sort or other, which the political movements of the last fifteen years have called forth both in England and on the Continent; and it will be confessed by any candid American observer, that there are various phenomena, both social and political, to be witnessed in the United States which do give color to a large proportion of them. There is hardly one of them for which some foundation, or something like foundation, may not be found in some phase or other of American society or government.

If we asked an American of conservative tastes and opinions to say frankly what he thought of this picture, he would probably take exception to a very large portion of it; he would accuse it of gross exaggeration at least; and if asked to sketch the changes for the worse which, in his opinion, had taken place in American society within the last fifty or sixty years, he would present us with something different, but different rather in degree than in kind. He would say that there had been since the beginning of the century a great deterioration in the character, attainments, and social standing of the men sent by the Free States to fill the various offices of government. (For the purpose of this discussion, we leave the Slave States out of the argument, and for obvious reasons.) The men who now occupy the judicial bench, fill the national and State legislatures, and sit at the council boards and in the mayoral chairs of the great cities, are inferior in training, ability, education, and social position to those who filled the same positions fifty or sixty years ago. Forensic eloquence has, he would say, consequently undergone a corresponding change for the worse. It is neither so chaste, so simple, nor so forcible as it was at the time of the foundation of the government, and for many years after. The art of debating has all but died out, for it is an art which needs acute and ready intellect, saturated with reading and experience and trained in fence, to sustain it. Speeches in Congress and in the legislatures on important questions are now, for the most part, long essays, written out previously, often full of irrelevancy and commonplace, and repeated altogether, or in a great degree, from memory, to inattentive audiences. If the orator is forced by circumstances to depart from his prepared course, and defend himself and his opinions extemporaneously against an extemporaneous attack, his scanty mental resources force him in the great majority of cases to fall back on personal vituperation. And the small amount of previous thought or culture which is revealed in the legislative discussions is, he would add, very remarkable. Hardly any subject seems important enough or exciting enough to call out anything much better than the philosophy of hotel parlors or the logic of newspaper articles. What is worse than all this, legislation is confessedly more hasty, more reckless, and more ill-digested than formerly. None of these things can be ascribed to any diminution in the number of men of culture and ability produced by the country in our day as compared with a former one. Their number bears, there is little doubt, a very much larger proportion to the population than it ever did. But they are unceremoniously thrust aside from public life, and are generally found either toiling in commerce or in the professions, or else killing time and ambition in social trifling or in foreign travel.

Of the present as compared with the former condition of the bar, too, he would say, that not only has etiquette disappeared from it, but in a large number of the States the relations of judge and counsel are marked by a familiarity which, on one side at least, is mingled with a good deal of contempt. Admission to the profession has come to be, not a proof of fitness, but a political right; and the result is, that its ranks are crowded by needy aspirants, not after forensic distinction, but after money, whose want of learning and preparation for their duties, and entire exemption from the once powerful restraints of professional opinion, are fast destroying the reputation for lore, ability, and integrity which a former generation achieved for the American bar.

If you direct his attention to the social condition of the country, he will tell you that, while the habits of the American population are much more luxurious than they were half a century ago, while there is far more money in circulation, and while most of the pleasures of life are placed within the reach of a much larger class than in the earlier days of the Republic, the manners are not only less ceremonious, but less dignified and refined; that there is not only less punctiliousness, but less courtesy and grace in social intercourse; that the family bond is not so strong as it used to be; that there is less respect for authority, not only in the household, but in the state; that both the father and the judge find themselves much less important and less respected personages than they once were; that dress and manners have less weight and importance than formerly, and that there has grown up within thirty years a sort of affectation of carelessness in attire, in demeanor, and even in language; that the English of the bulk of the population is not so pure, nor their accent so refined, as those of the fathers; that more is now read, but less is digested, than in the last generation; and that in short, on the whole, there is both in externals and in mental characteristics less *finish* to be found amongst Americans of the present day than amongst those of half a century ago.

It matters not for our present purpose which of these pictures of American society is the more faithful. We are content to accept either of them as true, since the explanation which we propose to offer for the phenomena which they bring before us will, if it be of any value whatever, be as applicable to the first as to the last. But the moment we address inquiries as to the cause of these phenomena to any of the political sects of the present day, who are fairly entitled to the credit of either observing or thinking, we find ourselves launched on a sea of contradiction. If we apply to a "conservative," he will, if advanced in years, probably acknowledge the occurrence of the changes we have enumerated above, and will, in nine cases out of ten, assure us that it is foreign immigration that has done it all; that, if no Irish or Germans had ever come to the country, no changes for the worse, either in government or society, would ever have taken place. If we ask an Englishman of any but the radical school, or any of those native political philosophers who import their opinions with their gloves and pomatum, and study science in Sir Archibald Alison and the *Quarterly Review*, they will tell us that whatever of decay or deterioration is visible in anything American is the direct and palpable consequence of universal suffrage; that democracy has ruined the country, and that the only road to improvement lies through revolution.

When we come to inquire to what extent the social or political condition of the Northern States has been influenced or modified by foreign immigration, we find ourselves dealing with a subject on which all those writers whose opinions are largely affected by their taste are agreed; and most of those who in America venture on political speculation belong to this class. If we take up the hundred laments over the degeneracy of our political condition, which issue from them every year in books, newspapers, speeches, and sermons, we shall find that in nine cases out of ten it is ascribed to the great influx of ignorant foreigners which has been going on for the last thirty years. In many, perhaps most, of the controversies which are carried on with European critics touching the state and prospects of the republic, this argument is put very prominently forward. Any coarseness, corruption, or recklessness, either of conduct or language, which shows itself in the management of our public affairs, and attracts the attention of foreign critics, is apt to be ascribed by the native advocate to the malign influence of the human drift, which the convulsions and misfortunes of European society have cast on our shores.

We suspect that much of the prevalence of this theory is due to the fact, that those who most frequently put it forward in print live in the great cities, where foreigners are most numerous, where they are in the habit of acting in masses, and where their influence is most easily seen and felt. It is there that the evils which flow from their presence are most palpable; and those who have under their eyes its effects on the local government are apt to draw from the spectacle the most lugubrious inferences as to the condition of the rest of the country. But the estimate of the weight and extent of foreign influence upon politics and society, based on the impressions thus formed, is not confirmed by a careful consideration of the facts.

The whole number of foreigners who have entered the country between 1790 and 1860 is 5,296,414; and of these, 5,062,000 entered since the year 1820, or an average of 126,500 a year during forty years, being of course a mere driblet when compared to the native population. The immigration since 1860 has been very large; and the number actually resident in the whole of the United States in that year was about 4,000,000, or less than one-seventh of the entire population. But it is not since 1860 that the political or social deterioration which we are discussing has shown itself. One might imagine, on listening to some of the accounts one hears of the extent to which foreigners are responsible for the vices of American politics, that at least half the inhabitants of the Free States had for many years been persons of European birth, and that the intelligent and educated natives of the country had had a severe struggle, under universal suffrage, to retain any share in the government, and had been long threatened with seeing the management of a political system, which requires a large amount of virtue and knowledge on the part of those who live under it to enable it to work successfully, pass into the hands of a class of men bred in ignorance and degraded by oppression. But when it is taken into account that the foreign immigration has flowed slowly during a great number of years, that a large proportion of it has, of course, been composed of women and children, and that the small number of voters which it in any one year has contributed to the electoral body, have been scattered over the Union from Maine to California, and have been divided into different camps by difference of language, religion, and nationality, and have been generally too ignorant and helpless to devise or pursue a common policy, it is easy to see that the current notion of the extent of their influence on national politics and on political life, has been greatly exaggerated.

The only instance, we believe, in which the foreigners can be said to have combined to make their influence felt at the elections, occurred during the "Know Nothing" movement; but this was the result of a direct attack on their own privileges and standing. On all other occasions, we find them serving under American leaders, and assailing or defending purely American ideas; and so far from seeking position or influence by banding together, their great aim and desire are, as is well known, to efface all marks of their foreign origin, and secure complete absorption in the American population. And how do they accomplish this? Not by imposing their ideas on the natives, or dragging them down to their level, but by adopting native ideas and manners and customs, educating their children in American habits, or, in other words, raising themselves to the American level. In fact, there is nothing they resent so keenly as any attempt to place them in a different category, or ascribe to them different interests or motives, from those of Americans. If they were conscious of the power of making themselves felt as a separate body, this would hardly be the case. So far from seeking to obliterate the distinction between themselves and Americans, they would endeavor to maintain and perpetuate it.

It may be said, however, that, although the foreign element in the population may not influence American politics in a way sufficient to account for the political changes of the last half-century directly by its votes, it does influence them indirectly by the modifications it effects in the national character through intermarriage and social intercourse. The effect upon temperament of intermixture of blood is very much too obscure a subject, in our opinion, to be safely made the basis of any theory of national progress or decline, even by those who attach most importance to it, and profess to know most about it. But even if we accord it all the force they claim for it, time enough has not yet elapsed to enable us to judge of its effects in this country. This much is certain, that the great features of the American character do not seem to have undergone any sensible change since the Revolution. The American of to-day, as an individual, presents very much the same great traits, moral and intellectual, which his father and grandfather presented before him ; the main difference between the three generations being, that the present one displays its idiosyncrasies on a very much wider field. A chemical analysis (as it has been termed) of natural character is, however, something from which no sound thinker will ever hope to arrive at conclusions of much value for any purposes not purely speculative.

As regards the influence exercised on American life by foreigners through the medium of social intercourse, we doubt very much if anybody has ever attached much importance to it, who has given the matter any serious consideration. All that seems necessary to remove the idea that it has been instrumental in modifying either American opinions or manners, is to call attention to the class of society from which the immigrants are generally drawn, and to the social position which they occupy in this country. If we except a few lawyers, a few doctors, a few professors and teachers, and a few merchants in the large cities, eager to make money enough to enable them to return with fortunes to their native country, it may be said that ninety-nine out of every hundred foreigners who come to the United States with the intention of settling here, are drawn from the ranks of the European peasantry—Germans, entirely ignorant of the English language; and Irish, who, as well as the Germans, are separated from even the poorest of the native population by an entirely different standard of living, and a wide difference of habits and of religion. There is between them and even the lower grades of American society a barrier, which is none the less formidable for not being recognized by law. They fill, all but exclusively, the menial callings, and intermarriage between them and pure-blooded Americans is very rare. And, as we have said, so far from acting as propagators of foreign opinions or manners, the whole energy of the new-comers is spent, for years after their arrival, not in diffusing their own ways of thinking and feeling, but in strenuous and generally successful efforts to get rid of them, and adopt those of their American neighbors.

When we come to consider the European explanation of the defects which show themselves in the political and social system of the United

States—and it is an explanation which large numbers of Americans belonging to the wealthier classes have of late years been disposed to accept as the true one—that they are the direct and all but inevitable result of the spread of democracy, we are met on the threshold by the authority of a great name, of which we desire to speak with all possible respect. That theory of the cause of the decline in the character and ability of public men in America, and the consequent increasing corruption which marks our public life, of the decrease of respect for law and authority, and of the growing absorption in the pursuit of money, which, before the war at least, were so generally observed and deplored, undoubtedly owes to M. de Tocqueville most of its weight and authority. His "Democracy in America" was and is perhaps the most remarkable contribution to the philosophy of politics in modern times. It solves some of the most puzzling problems of a novel condition of society, and one of which the European world, prior to the appearance of his book, knew very little, with an ease and dexterity which it is impossible, even for those who mistrust many of his conclusions, not to admire. And the book is throughout evidently the product of laborious thinking and conscientious and painstaking observation, controlled by a sound philosophic method. Probably no one, and certainly no foreigner, was ever so successful in sketching American character, in catching the spirit of American life, and in revealing the nature and tendency of American ideas.

He has framed a theory of the influences and tendencies of democracy, partly *a priori* by deductions from the principles of human nature, and partly from his observations of social phenomena in France and America; and this is, we believe, the process now recognized as the only one that is trustworthy in the conduct of inquiries in social science. But the conclusions thus drawn depend inevitably for their soundness on the accuracy of the observations on which they are partly based, and by which alone their accuracy can, at present, be tested. If the peculiar state of opinions, feelings, and manners, and peculiar tone of thought, which M. de Tocqueville found in America, be not really altogether the result of equality of conditions, or of democratic institutions, that portion of his speculations which is dependent on the correctness of this assumption of course falls to the ground; and a very large portion of them is dependent upon it.

Nevertheless, to assume that those social phenomena which are peculiar to America are solely the result of democracy, is to attempt the solution of social problems by what Mr. Mill calls the "chemical method," the imperfection of which we cannot do better than describe in his own words.

"If so little can be done by the experimental method to determine the conditions of an effect of many combined causes in the case of medical science, still less is this method applicable to a class of phenomena more complicated than even those of physiology—the phenomena of politics and history. There the plurality of causes exists in almost boundless excess, and the effects are for the most part inextricably interwoven with one another. To add to the embarrassment, most of the inquiries in political science relate to the production of effects of the most comprehensive description, such as the public wealth, public security, public morality, and the like—results liable to be affected directly or indirectly, either in *plus* or in *minus*, by nearly every fact which exists or event which occurs in human society. The vulgar notion that the safe methods on political subjects are those of Baconian induction, that the true guide is not generally reasoning but specific experience, will one day be quoted as among the most unequivocal marks of a low state of the speculative faculties in any age in which it is accredited. Nothing can be more ludicrous than the sort of parodies on experimental reasoning which one is accustomed to meet with, not in popular discussions only, but in grave treatises, when affairs of nations are the theme. 'How,' it is asked, 'can an institution be bad, when the country has prospered under it?' 'How can such or such causes have contributed to the prosperity of one country, when another has prospered without them?' Whoever makes use of an argument of this sort, not intending to deceive, should be sent back to learn the elements of some one of the more easy physical sciences. Such reasoners ignore the fact of a plurality of causes in the very case which affords the most signal example of it."—*Logic*, Vol. II., pp. 489, 490, Eng. ed.

To make American society what it is, no one cause has sufficed, and what number or combination of causes has been instrumental in creating the phenomena which attract so much of the attention of political philosophers, it is impossible in the existing state of political science to determine.

It would be very unjust to M. de Tocqueville to leave it to be understood that he himself was not fully aware of all this. In fact, he expressly acknowledges in more than one place the existence of a plurality of causes for all the phenomena of American society, as well as that of other countries. He recognizes the immense influence "which the nature of the country, the origin of its inhabitants, the religion of the early settlers, their acquired knowledge, their previous habits, have exercised and do exercise independently of democracy upon their mode of thought and feeling." (Vol. II., p. iv, Bowen's ed.) And he in various places warns his readers that the phenomena he is discussing are either due to other causes than "the principle of equality," or are rather American than democratic. But he seems frequently to forget this in the course of his reasoning, and on almost every page draws conclusions as to the probable condition of democratic society in general from what he describes as American society, or else draws these conclusions from general principles, and verifies them by an examination of American institutions or manners. The effect of either of these processes on the mind of the ordinary reader is, of course, very similar. We have not space to quote as fully as would be necessary, if we quoted at all, in support of these comments; but anyone who consults the chapters entitled, respectively, "Why Americans are more addicted to Practical than to Theoretical Science," "The Literary Characteristics of Democratic Times," "Why American Writers and Orators often use an Inflated Style," "Of Parliamentary Eloquence in the United States," "Why the Americans are so Restless in the midst of their Prosperity," as well as most of the subsequent ones, will find the remarks we have made on the author's method of reasoning fully borne out. And the discussions of the nature and tendencies of democratic institutions which have been created in Europe by the war prove, we think, all but conclusively, that, whatever may have been his own state of mind in writing, De Tocqueville's influence on European opinion has been to a certain extent misleading. Hardly one book or article in newspaper or magazine has appeared on American affairs, in which any attempt is made to extract lessons from our condition for English guidance, which does not take it for granted, not only that democracy has produced everything that is considered objectionable in American society, but that democratic institutions transferred to any other country would give rise to precisely the same phenomena. A very large portion of the intense hostility of the upper classes to the United States is due to the prevalence amongst them of this delusion.

We cannot, for our part, help believing that any speculation as to the causes of the peculiar phenomena of American society, in which its outward circumstances during the last eighty years do not occupy the leading position, must lead to conclusions radically erroneous, and calculated to do great injustice not only to the American people, but to democracy itself. At these, nevertheless, M. de Tocqueville has only glanced, and most of those who have followed him in discussing democratic tendencies have overlooked them altogether.

If we inquire what are those phenomena of American society which it is generally agreed distinguish it from that of older countries, we shall find, we are satisfied, that by far the larger number of them may be attributed in a great measure to what, for want of a better name, we shall call "the frontier life" led by a large proportion of the inhabitants, and to the influence of this portion on manners and legislation, rather than to political institutions, or even to the equality of conditions. In fact, we think that these phenomena, and particularly those of them which excite most odium in Europe, instead of being the effect of democracy, are partly its cause, and that it has been to their agency more than to aught else, that the democratic tide in America has owed most of its force and violence.

If we examine closely the history of the Northern Colonies, we shall find that, just as their founders left England in search of religious liberty, but were careful not to suffer it within their jurisdiction, so also, although they were most of them animated by republican sentiments, and although a commonwealth was doubtless their ideal polity, "the principle of equality" never obtained any recognition, either in fact or in theory, amongst them or their descendants, down to the time of the Revolution. The distinction between the gentleman and the common man not only existed in New England till the end of the last century, but it was recognized in forms of address, a mode of making it peculiarly repugnant to democratic feeling. Nor, so far as we can learn, was "the principle of authority" much weaker in the Colonies, at any period of their history, than in England. The civil functionaries in Boston and Plymouth were held in a respect very little, if at all, short of that which was rendered to such dignitaries in London. The clergy exercised an influence over both manners and politics which, it is very certain, they never secured in the mother country. And the family bond, in spite of the very different conditions by which it was surrounded in the New World, was not, we believe, weaker than in the Old. Down to the time of the Revolution the *paterfamilias* was still a power in society, and exercised an amount of control over the life and conduct of his children, and received from them an amount of homage, which are no longer seen. Etiquette, both public and private, was still an object of attention and respect. Members of the Colonial legislatures were really representatives, and not, as now, delegates; and to sit amongst them was an honor to which persons without an established social position did not readily aspire. Legislation, too, though it might be based on erroneous principles, was rarely so reckless or so hasty as at present. And, though last not least, the religious organizations subjected nearly every member of the community to a discipline so rigid and exacting, that it has left marks on the New England mind and character which will probably not be effaced as long as the race lasts.

How was it that this state of things lasted so long? How was it that the ideas brought by the Colonists from the Old World retained their force for a century and a half, in spite of the facts that communication with the mother country was rare, slow, and difficult, that she exercised little or no influence at that time through her literature, for literature had not then been popularized, that the life led by the Colonists was such as to bring the idea of equality into the fullest prominence, that hereditary wealth was almost unknown amongst them, and that their social condition necessarily fostered individualism? How was it that that democratic tide which, within the last fifty years, has overwhelmed everything, during the previous hundred and fifty gave so few signs of its rising?

The *Saturday Review*, in an attempt it made about a year ago to answer these questions, ascribed the rapid progress of democracy in America since the Revolution to the stoppage at that period of the supply of younger sons of gentlemen, which, according to the writer, was then beginning to flow into the country, and would, if the separation had not taken place, have continued to flow in ever since. Another explanation frequently offered by speculators of the same school is, that the change was due to the removal of the social influence of the monarchy, which, as long as the connection with the mother country lasted, prevented the republican form of government, which in reality already existed, from producing its natural effect on manners and ideas.

Both of these theories, however, receive a severe blow from the course of events in Australia. This colony was established on a thoroughly aristocratic basis. It received and continues to receive a large contribution of "younger sons" than has fallen to the lot of any other, and great numbers of them went out with sufficient capital to enable them to maintain their social position. The land-laws, too, encouraged the appropriation of large tracts of country to their exclusive use as sheep pastures, and for a long while rendered capital almost as essential to success in life there as in England. The colony had that which we are now taught to consider the essential basis of aristocratic society, a servile class, in the convicts, and, more than this, it has remained up to the present in social and political dependence on England; yet in spite of all these things the progress of democracy there has been steady and rapid. Universal suffrage has been established throughout the island; the property qualification for members of the legislatures has been abolished; the vote is taken by ballot, and the press and public life are almost exact counterparts of those of the United States, and all this within eighty years of the first settlement of the country.

We are far from asserting that the ideas of the equality of men, which, according to Professor Maine, was extracted from the Roman juridical maxim that "men were *born* equal," converted, by a not uncommon transformation, by the French literary men of the eighteenth century into a political dogma, and by them transmitted to the Virginian lawyers, had nothing to do, after its manipulation by the Jeffersonian school, with the spread of democracy in the United States. But it could, after all, amongst a people so intensely practical as the Americans, and so averse from speculation in politics, have effected very little, if the field had not been prepared for it by other causes. It could never have embodied itself either in political or social movements of the popular mind, had it not been made ready for its reception by influences of vastly more potency than a foreign dogma can ever have amongst a people of Anglo-Saxon origin.

The agency which, in our opinion, gave democracy its first great impulse in the United States, which has promoted its spread ever since, and has contributed most powerfully to the production of those phenomena in American society which hostile critics set down as peculiarly democratic, was neither the origin of the Colonists, nor the circumstances under which they came to the country, nor their religious belief; but the great change in the distribution of the population, which began soon after the Revolution, and which continues its operation up to the present time.

Population during the first hundred years of Colonial history was kept from spreading widely by its smallness, by the Indians, and by the attraction of the sea-coast, which furnished a ready means of intercommunication. The very feebleness of the Colonists in point of numbers constituted a strong motive for keeping close together. The aborigines, who still held the forests all around them, were a standing menace to their security, and could only be kept in check by constant and watchful co-operation. Moreover, labor was too scarce to make the opening of roads into the interior an easy task; and even when opened they furnished but sorry facilities for traffic. The weight of this consideration can be better appreciated by remembering that until the present century America was completely dependent on Europe, not only for the luxuries, but for most of the comforts and conveniences and many of the necessaries of life. During the Colonial period, and especially during the early part of it, most of the clothing and tools of the inhabitants were brought from England; which fact, of course, in itself furnished a strong reason for not wandering far from the coast. Accordingly we find that, at the outbreak of the Revolution, the Colonists consisted of a string of settlements along the shore, lying a few miles apart, and carrying on most of their intercourse by water. Even the pioneers had rarely penetrated inland more than fifty or a hundred miles, and generally along the rivers only.

Now these obstacles to expansion performed for the Colonists precisely the same office which is performed in older countries by want of space, and exercised much the same influence on their social progress. It produced comparative density of population; and the effects of density of population, wherever it is not accompanied by very great numbers, as in large cities, are well known. It strengthens public opinion, represses individualism, tightens the social relations, and thus gives fixity to old customs and ideas, and stability to authority. It did all this and more for the early settlers. They landed from Europe in companies, with a social organization already formed; and the difficulty of scattering enabled them to preserve it, and preserve the ideas on which it was based, for over a century, in spite of the fact that their daily life was one which tended powerfully to develop the spirit of independence and self-reliance—more so, in fact, than that of our backwoodsmen at the present day, for most of the appliances by which modern invention mitigates the hardships of pioneering were then wanting. The Church retained its hold on the young and on the old; the opinion of the community kept even the strongest natures in subjection, and all the more readily, because in those days the community to each of its members was the world. It was difficult to leave it, and there was no appeal from its judgments.

The history of colonization in all ages and climes tells much the same story. Wherever the colonists are prevented by any cause from scattering, and congregate from the outset in communities, the colony remains a tolerably faithful reflection of life and manners in the mother country.

The completeness with which the individual in the Greek republics was merged in the state or city, rendered the notion of individual action or individual existence, apart from the community to which he belonged, abhorrent to him. He never thought of himself in any character but that of a citizen. Consequently, we find that Greek colonization meant simply the production on a foreign shore of as faithful an image of the metropolis as circumstances would permit. The Colonists, far from scattering in search of fortune, massed themselves together in towns; and the result was that the Greek ideas and traditions and customs, both political and religious, were preserved with the most extraordinary fidelity; and this is rendered all the more remarkable from the fact that the elements of which ancient colonies were composed were at least as heterogeneous as those of the colonies of modern times.[*] The Roman colonies, except the military ones of later days, were founded under the influence of the same feeling, and remained, however far removed from the great city, her living images—"effigies parva, simulacraque populi Romani."

---

[*] Seneca's account of the causes which led to emigration in ancient times is curious, from its applicability to the emigration of our own day. "Nec omnibus eadem causa relinquendi, quærendique patriam fuit. Alios excidia urbium suarum, hostilibus armis elapsos, in aliena, spoliatos suis, expulerunt; alios domestica seditio submovit; alios nimia superfluentis populi frequentia, ad exonerandas vires, emisit; alios pestilentia, aut frequens terrarum hiatus, aut aliqua intoleranda infelicis soli vitia ejecerunt; quosdam fertilis oræ et in majus laudatæ, fama corrupit; alios alia causa excivit domibus suis."—*Consol. ad Helviam.*, Cap. 6. War, revolution, over-population, pestilence, earthquakes, poverty of soil, and a vague desire of bettering their condition, are the causes that still send men forth in quest of "fresh fields and pastures new."

In those modern colonies which have, for any reason, been prevented from scattering widely, we witness much the same phenomena. The South American, who is gregarious by temperament, and who is cooped up on the edge of his great rivers by the impenetrability of tropical forests, remains to this day simply an indolent Spaniard, as conservative, as hostile to novelties or movement, as any peasant or shop-keeper in Aragon. And if we travel through Lower Canada, we find that the *habitans*, whose French horror of solitude, as well as the conquest of the country by the British, has kept them congregated in the old settlements, have preserved until very recently the social organization under which the first emigrants left their country. They continued to be the only faithful picture of the France which the Revolution destroyed, and even yet any one who wishes to get an accurate knowledge of the feelings, relations, and ideas which formed the basis of the old *régime*, would find them in far better preservation on the banks of the St. Lawrence than on those of the Loire or the Garonne.

The Revolutionary struggle in America produced the usual effect of great civil commotions. It unsettled industry, broke up families, reduced large numbers to poverty, and diminished production; and, by habituating large bodies of men to the change and license of camp life, rendered the even tenor of the way which they had previously pursued in their homes no longer tolerable. Then came the usual *sequelæ* of a long war. When peace was concluded, a spirit of restlessness was diffused through the country, and an eagerness for adventure, which the *fama fertilis oræ* that then began to be wafted from the West intensified from day to day. The emigration westward set in with a vigor which had never before been witnessed; and thenceforward, for a short period, new States were rapidly added to the confederation. Kentucky came in in 1792; Tennessee, in 1796; Ohio, in 1802; but here there was a pause. The movement was checked evidently by the material difficulties which attended any further advance. Either it had reached a point at which remoteness from civilization became inconvenient or disagreeable, or else the drain on the population of the Eastern States had exhausted all that portion of it which was fit for pioneering. During the next fourteen years there was no new State added to the Union, except Louisiana, which was admitted in 1812; but in 1816 the stream appears to have again begun to flow into the wilderness. Indiana was admitted that year; Mississippi followed in 1817; Illinois, in 1818; Alabama, in 1819; and Missouri, in 1821. Now, as this increase was contemporaneous with the spread of steam navigation on the great rivers, it is fair to presume that it was in a large degree due to it. There was then another pause of fifteen years, at the close of which the influence of the railroads which were then getting into operation began to show itself; and from this time forward, the movement of population into the Western wilds has steadily increased from year to year, being swelled by the affluent from abroad which has poured into the United States between the years 1820 and 1860 the enormous number of 5,062,414 persons. Arkansas, Michigan, Texas, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and Kansas have thus been added to the Union in rapid succession. We omit from consideration the Pacific States, California, Oregon, and Nevada.

It must be constantly borne in mind that this wonderful diffusion of population over the wilderness which seventy years ago lay between the seaboard States and the Mississippi Valley, could not have taken place without the application of steam to locomotion. In the absence of this invention, the number of new settlements must always have borne a small proportion to the old ones. The portion of the community in which habits and modes of thought were tolerably fixed, in which experience was highly valued, traditions were held in reverence, and on which the past had left traces of greater or less depth, would have so largely exceeded the portion engaged in the work of actually reclaiming the wilderness, that it would either have held the latter in political and moral subjection, and have imposed its ideas and manners on it, or would, at all events, have remained impervious to its influence. The West, instead of creating, as it has done, a social type in many respects distinct, would have remained completely under Eastern influence, and have simply reproduced the society from which it had sprung, its manners, ideas, and aspirations.

But with the assistance of steamboats and railways, and of immigration from Europe, the pioneering element in the population, the class devoted to the task of creating new political and social organizations as distinguished from that engaged in perfecting old ones, assumed a great preponderance. It spread itself thinly over a vast area of soil, of such extraordinary fertility that a very slight amount of toil expended on it affords returns that might have satisfied even the dreams of Spanish avarice. The result has been very much what we might have concluded, *a priori*, that it would be. A society composed at the period of its formation mainly of young men, coming from all parts of the world in quest of fortune, released from the ordinary restraints of family, church, and public opinion, even of the civil law, naturally and inevitably acquires a certain contempt for authority and impatience of it, and individualism among them develops itself very rapidly. If you place this society, thus constituted, in the midst of a wilderness, where each member of it has to contend, tools in hand, with Nature herself for wealth, or even subsistence, the ties which bind him to his fellows will for a while at least be rarely anything stronger than that of simple contiguity. The only mutual obligation which this relation suggests strongly is that of rendering assistance occasionally in overcoming material difficulties—in other words, the simplest bond which can unite human beings. Each person is, from the necessity of the case, so absorbed in his own struggle for existence, that he has seldom occasion or time for the consideration and cultivation of his social relations. He knows nothing of the antecedents of his neighbors, nor they of his. They are not drawn together, in all probability, by a single memory or association. They have drifted into the same locality, it is true, under the guidance of a common impulse, and this a selfish one. So that the settler gets into the habit of looking at himself as an individual, of contemplating himself and his career separate and apart from the social organization. We do not say that this breeds selfishness—far from it; but it breeds individualism.

If the members of such a society are compelled to work hard for the gratification of their desires, to meet and overcome great difficulties and hardships and dangers, the result is naturally the production of great energy, of great audacity, and of a self-confidence that rises into conceit. In this self-confidence is almost always contained a prodigious contempt for experience and for theory. The ends which such men have had in view having all been attained without the aid of either, they cannot see the use of them. They have found their own wits sufficient for the solution of every problem that has presented itself to them, so that deference to the authority of general maxims framed by persons who never found themselves placed in similar circumstances, wears an air of weakness or absurdity.

The devotion to material pursuits, which is necessary at the outset, is made absorbing in a country like the West, by the richness of the prizes which are offered to shrewd speculation and successful industry. Where probable or even possible gains are so great, the whole community gives itself up to the chase of them with an eagerness which is not democratic, but human. It would not, we think, be difficult to show that the existence in old countries of an idle class, content with moderate and secured fortunes, and devoted solely to amusement and the cultivation of art or literature, is largely due to the immense difficulty of making profitable investments. In those countries the capital accumulated by past generations is so great, and every field of industry is so thronged, that a very large number of those who find themselves possessed of a sum of money are forced to relinquish all hope of increasing it. For we know that whenever, as during "the railway mania" in England, or Law's Mississippi scheme in France, the chance, real or imaginary, is offered of drawing such prizes as every day fall to the lot of hundreds in America, men of every grade and calling rush after them with an ardor which no training or tastes or antecedents seem sufficient to restrain. The desire for wealth is one of the constant forces of human society, and if it seems to assert its sway more imperiously here than in Europe, it is not because it is fostered by the equality of conditions, but because its gratification is surrounded by fewer obstacles.

If to strong individualism, contempt for experience, and eagerness in pursuit of material gain, we add want of respect for training, and profound faith in natural qualities, great indifference as to the future, the absence of a strong sense of social or national continuity, and of taste in art and literature and oratory, we have, we believe, enumerated the leading defects which European writers consider inherent in democratic society. But these, too, are marked peculiarities of all societies newly organized in a new country. We know them to be so by actual observation, for which modern colonization has afforded us abundant facilities; while it is safe to say that trustworthy illustrations of them have never been discovered in any society which was simply democratic and not new. There is no feature of life in new States in America more marked than the general belief of the people in their own originality, and their respect for this quality. The kind of man they most admire is one who has evolved rules for the conduct of life out of his own brain by the help of his own observation; and they entertain a strong distrust of men who have learned what they know by a fixed course of study, mainly because persons who have passed the early part of their lives in learning out of books or from teachers are generally found less fitted to grapple with the kind of difficulties which usually present themselves in Western life, than those who were compelled to learn to conquer them by actual contact with them. So that the "self-made man," as he is called, meaning the man who has surmounted, with little or no aid from education, those obstacles by which the larger portion of the community find themselves hampered and harassed, is looked on as a sort of type of merit and ability.

The process by which the ideas that govern private life are transferred to the conduct of public affairs, is not difficult to understand. In a new community, in which there is not much time for either study or reflection, it would be difficult always to convince the public, even if any other kind of man were to be had, that the kind of man who displays most ability in the conduct of his own business is not the fittest to take charge of that of the public. That other qualities than those necessary for success in the career in which everybody else is running should be needed for legislation, is an idea which meets with no acceptance until enforced by experience. And in a really frontier village, in which no disturbing influences are in operation, it will probably be found that the prosperous management of a dry-goods store will be taken as strong indication of ability to fill the post of Secretary of the Treasury, and deal with the most intricate problems of national finance. But the successful politician in a new country, where deference for experience or culture has not yet grown up, is, after all, the man who has most facility in expressing the ideas which are filling the heads of his neighbors.

It may be taken as a general rule, that those who cannot look very far back do not look very far forward. Experience is the nurse of forethought. Youth is rarely troubled about to-morrow. Age is far-seeing, because it remembers so much. And communities made of the materials we are describing, as they have no past, are apt to be very careless about the future. The sense of political continuity, of the identity, for political purposes, of each generation with the one which has preceded it and the one which is to follow it, and of the consequent responsibility of each for the acts and promises of the other, is rarely deeply rooted in a state which has no past to dwell on. We are therefore not surprised to find that the doctrine of the absence of all right on the part of one generation to enter into any obligations that would bind its successor—a doctrine utterly subversive of what is called "public faith," and which, if carried out to its full extent, would reduce the intercourse of civilized nations to the mere interchange of compliments or abuse—was first openly preached and acted on in Mississippi, the person who now represents Southern statesmanship to the world being its author. But it is a doctrine which grows naturally in a new society. The reverse of it conflicts strongly with the notions of the proper limits of accountability, which are derived from the relations of individuals. There is little in the analogies presented by the relations of a man either with his family or his fellows, in such a society, to suggest the expediency or propriety of his helping, as a citizen, to repay money which was borrowed before he was born. We think it will generally be found that, when a state formed by colonization, as carried on in modern times, displays a proper disposition with regard to the public liabilities, it is rather owing to the feeling of local pride than to a deep sense of responsibility. When a loan contracted by the government of California, a few years ago, was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, the people, when the question was submitted to them, at once shouldered the debt. But it was spoken of in their newspapers as a very remarkable display of virtue, as something of which the State might fairly be proud. There was evidently at the bottom of these congratulations an opinion that, in the absence of any legal obligation, the moral one was not sufficiently strong to be imperative.

The belief that the production of an inflated, bombastic style of speaking and writing is one of the necessary results of democracy is very widespread, and is supported by M. de Tocqueville with more than usual confidence. He says:

"I have frequently remarked that the Americans, who generally treat of business in clear, plain language, devoid of all ornament, and so extremely simple as to be often coarse, are apt to become inflated as soon as they attempt a more poetical diction. They then vent their pomposity from one end of a harangue to the other; and to hear them lavish imagery on every occasion, one might fancy that they never spoke of anything with simplicity.

"The English less frequently commit a similar fault. The cause of this may be pointed out without much difficulty. In democratic communities, each citizen is habitually engaged in the contemplation of a very puny object, namely, himself. If he ever raises his looks higher, he perceives only the immense form of society at large, or the still more imposing aspect of mankind. His ideas are all either extremely minute and clear, or extremely general and vague; what lies between is a void. When he has been drawn out of his own sphere, therefore, he always expects that some amazing object will be offered to his attention; and it is on these terms alone that he consents to tear himself for a moment from the petty, complicated cares which form the charm and the excitement of his life."—Vol. II., p. 94.

But democracy produces this effect only in so far as it deprives writers and speakers of a high order of education, or draws them from a class which cannot or do not receive it. The uneducated or half-educated in all countries, and under every form of government, and in every condition of society, fall into an exaggerated and inflated style whenever they attempt to treat on paper or in public of any question not purely personal in its nature.

The uncultivated Englishman or Frenchman is guilty of precisely the same rhetorical faults as the uncultivated American; and the only reason why American bombast makes more impression on European observers than that of their own countrymen is that there is more of it, as a class of persons who in Europe are hardly ever called on to address the public, are in America tempted or obliged to do so very frequently. Rhetorical exaggeration is, in fact, an indication, not of a certain political or social state, but of a certain state of mental culture. How it is that taste is not a natural gift, and what kind of training is necessary for its acquisition, it is not necessary to discuss here. It is enough to know that, without training, no people, except perhaps the Greeks, has ever exhibited it. America itself furnishes a very striking illustration of the unsoundness of M. de Tocqueville's theory. A pure written and spoken style is found only in the democratic States of the Northeast, because there the writers and speakers are often either drawn from a cultivated class, or are under their influence. The literature and oratory of the aristocratic States of the South, on the contrary, are marked by an exaggeration, violence, and affectation so barbarous, that it may safely be said that no orators or writers who have ever figured in history have fallen to the same level. It is a striking proof of the extent to which the European public has been led astray on these subjects, that an English legal periodical of high standing, commenting a few months ago on the absurdity of the harangue delivered by Muller's counsel in New York, assigned as one of the excuses for Southern secession the natural disgust felt by "cultivated gentlemen" at the grotesqueness, absurdity, and inflation which democracy infused into writing and public speaking at the North. An assertion displaying greater ignorance of the peculiar characteristics of the North and of the South, it would be hard to meet with.

It may be said, however, that if democracy either deprives the highly educated class of all influence, and thus prevents their establishing an authoritative standard of taste, or if it places the half-educated in all the prominent positions in public life, so that it is they who give the oratory of the country its peculiar character, it is really as much responsible for the national tendency to bombast as if it produced it by its direct action. But the answer to this is, that nearly all the extravagance and inflation of speech or composition which are now to be met with in America are contributed either by the South or West, both of which are just in that stage of mental culture in which inflation of language is produced as naturally as weeds on a rank soil. The intense and necessary absorption of the West in the work of developing the material resources of the country puts high cultivation out of the question, but it does not do away with the necessity of government. Members of Congress have still to be elected; State Legislatures have still to meet; and weighty questions have to be discussed by somebody—and, in default of people of taste, they have to be discussed by people who have no taste, by men who labor under the usual weakness and delusion of the uneducated, that simple and straightforward language is not fit for use in dealing with great public affairs. If it be asked how it is that this class so largely preponderates in Congress, and in public life generally, as to present itself to the world as a fair specimen of the highest culture that democracy can produce, we reply that the new States have now for many years acquired a great preponderance over the older ones in population and wealth and resources, and consequently political preponderance also. Upon this great mass of powerful, energetic rusticity—we do not use the word as a term of reproach—the cultivation of the East has so far been able to make but very little impression. And this preponderance has been so overwhelming, that the West has succeeded to a certain extent in propagating in the East its ideas and manners, both political and social. It has succeeded in diffusing to some degree, even in New England, its contempt for and indifference to refinement or culture, its mistrust of men who have made politics a study, and its faith in the infallibility of majorities, not simply as a necessary political assumption, but as an ethical fact. Its influence in Congress is of course paramount, and its influence on the government every year increases. It now supplies our Presidents, a large body of our legislators, and a large portion of our army. It gives its tone to the national thought, and its direction to the national policy. As might be expected, it has, with its rude, wild energy, its excess of animal life, completely overwhelmed the thinkers of the older States, and driven most of them into private life, and taken upon itself to represent American democracy to the world. American democracy is thus made answerable by superficial observers for faults which flow not from its own nature, but from the outward circumstances of some of those who live under it.

We need hardly say, that we are very far from asserting that the state of society which we have been describing as "Western" can be predicated literally either of the whole West or of any part of it. There is probably not a village in it of which our picture is true in every particular. There are doubtless to be found in every district many departures from the general type which we have sketched, many modifications effected by the presence of cultivated people, or by the extraordinary intelligence and unusually favorable antecedents of the inhabitants. What we have endeavored to portray is the general features of society in new countries which have been subjected to the ordinary agencies of frontier life, and exempted from the disturbing influences of older and more finished organizations. In so far as our sketch is inaccurate as applied to the new States of the Union, to the same extent will our description of their influence on the East require modification. The study of society is not one of the exact sciences; and the utmost that the most careful inquirer can hope for is an approximation to the truth. This is all that we pretend to have achieved in the present instance, but it is sufficient for our purpose.

In so far as the influence exercised by that portion of the population which is immersed in the cares and toils of frontier life on the national character, or manners, or politics, or literature, or oratory, has been deteriorating or obstructive, it is, of course, fair matter for regret to all friends of rational progress. But those who are most disheartened by the contemplation of its effects may find abundant consolation in the consideration that its action is but temporary, and that every day that passes weakens its force and hastens its disappearance. The greatest fault of new countries is their newness, and for this the great remedy is time. As soon as the population gets settled in its seat, and its attention has ceased to be distracted by a multiplicity of prizes, and its energies to be absorbed in the mere struggle for shelter and food, the polishing process begins. This struggle, if it have hardened the hands, and tanned the foreheads, and roughened the manners of those engaged in it, has also most certainly developed qualities which, if they do not themselves constitute national greatness, are its only sure and lasting foundation. No friend of democracy who has watched the course of the West in this war can help feeling his blood stirred and his hopes strengthened by the vigor with which it has thrown itself into the strife, and the great richness of the blood and brain which it has sent into the arena. All the great generals of the war are Western men. No higher capacity for organization, for conceiving great enterprises, and conducting them with courage and fortitude, accuracy and punctuality, has been displayed than in those mushroom communities which yesterday were not. And if we turn from the military to the political field, we find everywhere the most striking proofs of the sagacity, foresight, patriotism, and tenacity of their population. We wish we could say there had been exhibited in the East so general, profound, and just an appreciation of the remoter bearings of this great contest, of its possible influence on society and government, as has been exhibited in the West.

There are no fundamental characteristics of "an imperial race," which the people of the new States have not revealed; and those who know them best see in the progress they are now making every reason to feel satisfied that the great material strength which they are developing will be, erelong, controlled and directed by a very high order of cultivation, both intellectual and æsthetic, and perhaps richer, more varied, and more original in many of its manifestations than any that has been seen in modern times. If the West should in future answer all the demands made on it by civilization with the alacrity and success with which it has answered those made on it by the political crisis through which we are now passing, the human race would, in a very short time, be even more indebted to it than the nation is already.

If, indeed, the defects which foreign observers see, and many of which Americans acknowledge and deplore, in the politics and society of the United States were fairly chargeable to democracy

—if "the principle of equality" were necessarily fatal to excellence in the arts, to finish in literature, to simplicity and force in oratory, to fruitful exploration in the fields of science, to statesmanship in the government, to discipline in the army, to grace and dignity in social intercourse, to subordination to lawful authority, and to self-restraint in the various relations of life—the future of the world would be such as no friend of the race would wish to contemplate: for the spread of democracy is on all sides acknowledged to be irresistible. Even those who watch its advance with most fear and foreboding confess that most civilized nations must erelong succumb to its sway. Its progress in some countries may be slower than in others, but it is constant in all; and it is accelerated by two powerful agencies—the Christian religion and the study of political economy.

The Christian doctrine that men, however unequal in their condition or in their gifts on earth, are of equal value in the eyes of their Creator, and are entitled to respect and consideration, if for no other reason, for the simple one that they are human souls, long as it has been preached, has, strange to say, only very lately begun to exercise any perceptible influence on politics. It led a troubled and precarious life for nearly eighteen hundred years in conventicles and debating clubs, in the romance of poets, in the dreams of philosophers and the schemes of philanthropists. But it is now found in the cabinets of kings and statesmen, on the floor of parliament-houses, and in the most secret of diplomatic conferences. It gives shape and foundation to nearly every great social reform, and its voice is heard above the roar of every revolution.

And it derives invaluable aid in keeping its place and extending its influence in national councils from the rapid spread of the study of political economy, a science which is based on the assumption that men are free and independent. There is hardly one of its principles which is applicable to any state of society in which each individual is not master of his own actions and sole guardian of his own welfare. In a community in which the relations of its members are regulated by status and not by contract, it has no place and no value. The natural result of the study and discussion which the ablest thinkers have expended on it during the last eighty years has been to place before the civilized world in the strongest light the prodigious impulse which is given to human energy and forethought and industry, and the great gain to society at large, by the recognition in legislation of the capacity, as well as of the right, of each human being to seek his own happiness in his own way. Of course no political system in which this principle has a place can long avoid conceding to all who live under it equality before the law; and from equality before the law to the possession of an equal share in the making of the laws, there is, as everybody must see who is familiar with modern history, but a very short step.

If this spread of democracy, however, was sure, as its enemies maintain, to render great attainments and great excellence impossible or rare, to make literary men slovenly and inaccurate and tasteless, artists mediocre, professors of science dull and unenterprising, and statesmen conscienceless and ignorant, it would threaten civilization with such danger that no friend of progress could wish to see it. But it is difficult to discover on what it is, either in history or human nature, that this apprehension is founded. M. de Tocqueville and all his followers take it for granted that the great incentive to excellence, in all countries in which excellence is found, is the patronage and encouragement of an aristocracy; that democracy is generally content with mediocrity. But where is the proof of this? The incentive to exertion which is widest, most constant, and most powerful in its operation in all civilized countries, is the desire of distinction; and this may be composed either of love of fame or love of wealth, or of both. In literary and artistic and scientific pursuits, sometimes the strongest influence is exerted by a love of the subject. But it may be safely said that no man has ever yet labored in any of the higher callings to whom the applause and appreciation of his fellows was not one of the sweetest rewards of his exertions. There is probably not a masterpiece in existence, either in literature or in art, probably few discoveries in science have ever been made, which we do not owe in a large measure to the love of distinction. Who paints pictures, or has ever painted them, that they may delight no eye but his own? Who writes books for the mere pleasure of seeing his thoughts on paper? Who discovers or invents, and is willing, provided the world is the better of his discoveries or inventions, that another should enjoy the honor? Fame has, in short, been in all ages and in all countries recognized as one of the strongest springs of human action—

"The spur that doth the clear spirit raise
To scorn delight and live laborious days"—

sweetening toil, robbing danger and poverty and even death itself of their terrors.

What is there, we would ask, in the nature of democratic institutions, that should render this great spring of action powerless, that should deprive glory of all radiance, and put ambition to sleep? Is it not notorious, on the contrary, that one of the most marked peculiarities of democratic society, or of a society drifting toward democracy, is the fire of competition which rages in it, the fevered anxiety which possesses all its members to rise above the dead level to which the law is ever seeking to confine them, and by some brilliant stroke become something higher and more remarkable than their fellows? The secret of that great restlessness, which is one of the most disagreeable accompaniments of life in democratic countries, is in fact due to the eagerness of everybody to grasp the prizes of which in aristocratic countries only the few have much chance. And in no other society is success more worshipped, is distinction of any kind more widely flattered and caressed. Where is the successful author, or artist, or discoverer, the subject of greater homage than in France or America? And yet in both the principle of equality reigns supreme; and his advancement in the social scale has gone on *pari passu* in every country with the spread of democratic ideas and manners. Grub Street was the author's retreat in the aristocratic age; in this democratic one, he is welcome at the King's table, and sits at the national council-board. In democratic societies, in fact, excellence is the first title to distinction; in aristocratic ones, there are two or three others which are far stronger, and which must be stronger, or aristocracy could not exist. The moment you acknowledge that the highest social position ought to be the reward of the man who has the most talent, you make aristocratic institutions impossible. But to make the thirst for distinction lose its power over the human heart, you must do something more than establish equality of conditions; you must recast human nature itself.

Nor does the view which M. de Tocqueville takes, and which Mr. Mill in his "Dissertations and Discussions" seems to share, of the character of the literature which democratic societies are likely to call for, or have supplied to them, derive much support from experience. Mr. Mill says, that in a democratic society

> "There is a greatly augmented number of moderate successes, fewer great literary and scientific reputations. Elementary and popular treatises are immensely multiplied; superficial information far more widely diffused; but there are fewer who devote themselves to thought for its own sake, and pursue in retirement those profounder researches, the results of which can only be appreciated by a few. Literary productions are seldom highly finished; they are got up to be read by many, and to be read

but once. If the work sells for a day, the author's time and pains will be better laid out in writing a second, than in improving the first."

There could scarcely be a better answer to this than the immense sale which the works of both Mr. Mill himself and M. de Tocqueville meet with here and in England. They are both philosophical and highly finished, and yet they are read and studied by thousands in the two countries in which democracy is either triumphant or rapidly spreading. Illustrations of the same kind might, if we had space, be indefinitely multiplied. We will mention only one other. If we take that branch of literature, history, in which more than most others accuracy and research are essential, in which painstaking and industry and careful attention to details are absolutely necessary to give the result any real value, what do we find? Why, that it is a field of inquiry which, until democratic times, was barely scratched over, and that it is for the gratification and instruction of this much despised democratic "many" that it has been for the first time deeply ploughed and carefully cultivated. There is, we believe, hardly a single historical work composed prior to the end of the last century, except perhaps Gibbon's, which, judged by the standard that the criticism of our day has set up, would not, though written for the "few," be pronounced careless, slipshod, or superficial. Grote, Hallam, Motley, Prescott, Martin, Niebuhr, Mommsen, the most laborious, accurate, and critical historical inquirers the world has yet seen, have been produced by a democratic age, and have written for a democratic public. Compare them as to thoroughness and completeness with any of their predecessors of any age, and you are astonished by the contrast; and yet millions read and admire them. So also the first attempt to apply the historical method to the study of the philosophy of law has been made within two or three years, and the result is a work of extraordinary profundity, which is in everybody's hands. We might, by looking into other branches of knowledge, produce innumerable examples of the same kind, all going to show, in our opinion, that although there is, and will always be in every democratic community, an immense mass of slipshod, careless writing and speaking, the demand for accuracy, for finish, perhaps not in form, but certainly in substance, for completeness in all efforts to discover truth or enlighten mankind, so far from diminishing, grows with the spread of knowledge and the multiplication of readers.

There are some, however, who, while acknowledging that the love of distinction will retain its force under every form of social or political organization, yet maintain that to excel in the arts, science, or literature requires leisure, and the possession of leisure implies the possession of fortune. This men in a democratic society cannot have, because the absence of great hereditary wealth is necessary to the perpetuation of democracy. Every man, or nearly every man, must toil for a living; and therefore it becomes impossible for him to gratify the thirst for distinction, let him feel it ever so strongly. The attention he can give to literature or art or science must be too desultory and hasty, his mental training too defective, to allow him to work out valuable results, or conduct important researches. To achieve great things in these fields, it is said and insinuated, men must be elevated, by the possession of fortune, above the vulgar, petty cares of life; their material wants must be provided for before they can concentrate their thoughts with the requisite intensity on the task before them. Therefore it is to aristocracy we must look for any great advance in these pursuits.

The history of literature and art and philosophy is, however, very far from lending confirmation to this opinion. If it teaches us anything, it teaches us that the possession of leisure, far from having helped men in the pursuit of knowledge, seems to have impeded them. Those who have pursued it most successfully are all but invariably those who have pursued it under difficulties. The possession of great wealth no doubt gives facilities for study and cultivation which the mass of mankind do not possess; but it at the same time exerts an influence on the character which, in a vast majority of cases, renders the owner unwilling to avail himself of them. We owe to the Roman aristocracy the great fabric of Roman jurisprudence; but, since their time, what has any aristocracy done for art and literature, or law? They have for over a thousand years been in possession of nearly the whole resources of every country in Europe. They have had its wealth, its libraries, its archives, its teachers, at their disposal; and yet was there ever a more pitiful record than the list of "Royal and Noble Authors." One can hardly help being astonished, too, at the smallness and paltriness of the legacies which the aristocracy of the aristocratic age has bequeathed to this democratic age which is succeeding it. It has, indeed, handed down to us many glorious traditions, many noble and inspiring examples of courage and fortitude and generosity. The democratic world would certainly be worse off than it is if it never heard of the Cid, or Bayard, or Du Guesclin, of Montrose, or Hampden, or Russell. But what has it left behind it for which the lover of art may be thankful, by which literature has been made richer, philosophy more potent or more fruitful? The painting and sculpture of modern Europe owe not only their glory, but their very existence, to the labors of poor and obscure men. The great architectural monuments by which its soil is covered were hardly any of them the product of aristocratic feeling or liberality. If we accept a few palaces and a few fortresses, we owe nearly all of them to the labor or the genius or the piety of the democratic cities which grew up in the midst of feudalism. If we take away from the sum total of the monuments of Continental art all that was created by the Italian republics, the commercial towns of Germany and Flanders, and the communes of France, and by the unaided efforts of the illustrious obscure, the remainder would form a result poor and pitiful indeed. We may say much the same thing of every great work in literature, and every great discovery in science. Few of them have been produced by men of leisure, nearly all by those whose life was a long struggle to escape from the vulgarest and most sordid cares. And what is perhaps most remarkable of all is, that the Catholic Church, the greatest triumph of organizing genius, the most impressive example of the power of combination and of discipline which the world has ever seen, was built up and has been maintained by the labors of men drawn from the humblest ranks of society.

Aristocracy applied itself exclusively for ages to the profession of arms. If there was anything at which it might have seemed hopeless for democracy to compete with it, it was in the raising, framing, and handling of armies. But the very first time that a democratic society found itself compelled to wage war in defence of its own ideas, it displayed a force, an originality, a vigor and rapidity of conception, in this, to it, new pursuit, which speedily laid Europe at its feet. And the great master of the art of war, be it ever remembered, was born in obscurity and bred in poverty.

Nor, long as men of leisure have devoted themselves to the art of government, have they made any contributions worth mentioning to political science. They have displayed, indeed, consummate skill and tenacity in pursuing any line of policy on which they have once deliberately fixed; but all the great political reforms have been, though often carried into effect by aristocracies, conceived, agitated, and forced on the acceptance of the government by the middle and lower classes. The idea of equality before the law was originated in France by literary men. In England, the slave-trade was abolished by the labors of the middle classes. The measure met with the most vigorous opposition in the House of Lords. The emancipation of the negroes, Catholic emancipation, Parliamentary reform, law reform, especially the reform in the criminal law, free trade, and, in fact, nearly every change which has had for its object the increase of national happiness and prosperity, has been conceived by men of low degree, and discussed and forced on the upper classes by men busy about many other things.

We are, however, very far from believing that democratic society has no dangers or defects. What we have been endeavoring to show is, that the inquiry into their nature and number has been greatly impeded by the natural disposition of foreign observers to take the United States as a fair specimen of what democracy is under the most favorable circumstances. The enormous extent of unoccupied land at our disposal, which raises every man in the community above want, by affording a ready outlet for surplus population, is constantly spoken of as a condition wholly favorable to the democratic experiment—more favorable than could possibly offer itself elsewhere. In so far as it contributes to the general happiness and comfort, it no doubt makes the work of government easy; but what we think no political philosopher ought to forget is, that it also offers serious obstacles to the settlement of a new society on a firm basis, and produces a certain appearance of confusion and instability, both in manners and ideas, which unfit it to furnish a basis for any inductions of much value as to the tendencies to defects either of an equality of conditions or of democratic institutions.

POPULAR GOVERNMENT

I HAVE been reading, with the respect due to everything which Sir Henry Maine produces, his last volume, and particularly that most interesting chapter of it on "The Prospects of Popular Government." I confess, however, to having laid it down, after a careful perusal, without getting a very clear idea of the lesson he undertakes to teach. He says in his preface:

> In the essay on the Prospects of Popular Government I have shown that as a matter of fact Popular Government, since its reintroduction into the modern world, has proved itself to be extremely fragile. In the essay on the Nature of Democracy I have given reasons for thinking that, in the extreme form to which it tends, it is of all kinds of government by far the most difficult. In the Age of Progress I have argued that, in the perpetual change which, as understood in modern times, it appears to demand, it is not in harmony with the normal forces ruling human nature, and is apt, therefore, to lead to cruel disappointment or serious disaster.

Now the phrase "reintroduction into the modern world" implies that Popular Government existed in the ancient world, and, if so, an account of its working in the ancient world would certainly be a very important aid in judging whether it is really as "fragile" as Sir Henry Maine thinks it, for the longer the period in which we watch the working of an institution, the more we know about its durability. But he disposes of what he calls "the short-lived Athenian Democracy under whose shelter Art, Science, and Philosophy shot so wonderfully upward" by saying that "it was only an aristocracy which rose on the ruins of still another." In fact, he lays it down as a general proposition "that the progress of mankind has hitherto been effected by the rise and fall of aristocracies, by the formation of one aristocracy within another," and that "there have been many so-called democracies which have rendered services beyond price to civilization, but they were only peculiar forms of aristocracy." It is fair, I think, to conclude from this that there was no such thing as Popular Government in the ancient world at all, and that its appearance in the modern world was its first appearance anywhere, and was therefore not a "reintroduction." Consequently all that Sir Henry Maine, or any one else, knows about its fragility, he knows from observation of its working in the modern world. Whether a thing is durable or not, we can only tell from seeing it exposed, over a long period, to destructive agencies. That this period should in the case of a government be very long indeed, it is hardly necessary to say. Nothing is more delusive in the work of political speculation than short periods of observation. The most durable government the modern world has seen was that of the Venetian Republic, but there were in its history several periods of ten, twenty, or even fifty, years in which its continuance must have seemed to contemporaries something hardly to be looked for.

Now what opportunities for observing the durability of Popular Government has Sir Henry Maine had, on his own showing? The ancient world has afforded him none: what has the modern world afforded him? In other words, when did Popular Government first reveal itself to the philosophic eye? There is no doubt, he says, that Popular Government is of purely English origin, and that it made its first appearance in the triumph of the doctrine that government is the servant of the community, over the doctrine that it is the master of the community. The former, he says, after "tremendous struggles," was in spirit, if not in words, "affirmed in 1689." But that triumph was not complete, for he adds: "It was long before this doctrine was either fully carried out by the nation, or fully accepted by its rulers." In fact, he gives us to understand that it has not yet reached its final stage—that is, the stage at which tests of durability can begin to be applied to it. "What we are witnessing," he says, "in West European politics is not so much the establishment of a definite system, as the continuance, at various rates, of a process."

I gather from all this that Popular Government, as now known to us in the modern world, is a process which began about two centuries ago in a change of opinion on the part of the community in England with regard to the relations of the rulers and the ruled; that it did not, however, really influence English politics until about the beginning of this century. Consequently, Popular Government is, for the purposes of the philosophic observer, about eighty years old, and no more, and anything we desire to know about its durability and its general prospects we must learn from its history during that period. But the history of these eighty years seems to furnish a very small basis for induction on a matter so serious as the nature and prospects of a form of government. Sir Henry Maine, however, makes the most of it. Curiously enough, England furnishes him, apparently, with no materials at all. His reasons for believing Popular Government to be fragile he finds in the experience of the French with it, since 1789; of the Spaniards since 1812, and of the South American Republics since 1820. Having given some account of the frequent violent political changes which have occurred in these countries respectively within the above periods, he says:—

> The true reason why the extremely accessible facts which I have noticed are so seldom observed and put together is that the enthusiasts for Popular Government, particularly when it reposes on a wide basis of suffrage, are actuated by much the same spirit as the zealots of Legitimism. They assumed their principle to have a sanction antecedent to fact. It is not thought to be in any way invalidated by practical violations of it, which merely constitute so many more sins against imprescriptible right (p. 20).

Now I am not an enthusiast for Popular Government, or for any other form of government. I believe politics to be an extremely practical kind of business, and that the communities which succeed best in it are those which bring least enthusiasm to the conduct of their affairs. Nevertheless, I think I may so far speak for the enthusiasts as to suggest that the reason why they do not give more attention to Sir Henry Maine's "extremely accessible facts," and are not more troubled by them, is that they soberly and sincerely believe that these facts are irrelevant: that is, that they throw no light whatever on the nature or prospects of Popular Government.

The facts are simply that in two or three countries which have within the present century set up, or attempted to set up, representative institutions, frequent changes in the executive power have been wrought by violence. To make this bear directly on the question of fragility we should have to be sure that the state of mind which Sir Henry makes the first condition of Popular Government—that is, the belief that the rulers are and ought to be the servants of the ruled—prevailed in the countries which he cites as examples; that, in short, the setting up and casting down of governments which constitute his "extremely accessible facts" were the efforts of a community to carry out a political theory. We cannot judge of the working of any institution, whether monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy, unless it has its roots in popular approval. How monarchy works can only be known by seeing it in a community which believes in kings. How aristocracy works can only be known by seeing it in a community which believes in noblemen. How Popular Government works can, in like manner, only be known by seeing it in a community in which the doctrine on which it is based is fully and intelligently held by the bulk of the people.

To make France and Spain and the Spanish-American Republics good examples of the instability of Popular Government, Sir Henry Maine has to assume that the state of popular opinion and feeling which produced and sustains this form of government in England or America really exists, or has existed during the last half-century, in the Latin countries; and he does assume it tacitly, but very tacitly indeed. He is almost out of sight in his argument before one perceives what a monstrous assumption it is. There is neither in Spain nor in Spanish America any dominating political theory held by the mass of the people; in fact, there is nothing which a political philosopher can call a people. There are great landed proprietors; there is a powerful clergy; there is a standing army; there is an ignorant peasantry. There arise naturally in this state of things frequent disputes over the possession of the sovereignty, but they are disputes like the War of the Roses, or the Seven Years' War, between those who have and those who have not. They illustrate human nature in certain conditions of culture, as do most of the disorders of history, but they do not illustrate any theory of government any more than a fight over a captive's ransom in the cave of Greek brigands. In France, too, it is only since 1870 that the view of relations of the government of the people, on which Sir Henry Maine bases Popular Government, can be said to have really existed among the mass of the people. There have been since 1789 disciples of Rousseau and believers in the social contract—both of them great bugbears to Sir Henry Maine—in Paris and the other great cities, but until the present Republic was set up the peasantry never thought of controlling the government, or of treating its members as their servants. No matter what its form was, whether Constitutional Monarchy, Empire, or Republic, it was, in the eyes of provincials, the master of France, whose edicts, if they came from the proper office, nobody thought of disputing.

Next let me say that in assuming that the instability of government in a given country has and can have only one cause — namely, the view which the ruled take of their relation to the rulers —Sir Henry Maine seems to give countenance to a fallacy which is one of the great difficulties of modern politics, and which Mr. Mill has lucidly exposed as the "Chemical Method" of reasoning about political phenomena. Surely the following has an important bearing on the value of Sir Henry Maine's specific instances, or, as he calls them, "extremely accessible facts:"

In social phenomena the Composition of Causes is the Universal Law. Now, the method of philosophizing which may be termed chemical overlooks this fact, and proceeds as if the nature of man as an individual were not concerned at all, or concerned in a very inferior degree, in the operations of human beings in society. All reasoning in politics or social affairs, grounded on principles of human nature, is objected to by reasoners of this sort, under such names as "abstract theory." For the direction of their opinions and conduct, they profess to demand, in all cases without exception, specific experience. This mode of thinking is not only general with practitioners in politics, and with that very numerous class who (on a subject which no one, however ignorant, thinks himself incompetent to discuss) profess to guide themselves by common sense rather than by science; but is often countenanced by persons with greater pretensions to instruction; persons who, having sufficient acquaintance with books and with the current ideas to have heard that Bacon taught mankind to follow experience, and to ground their conclusions on facts instead of metaphysical dogmas, think that by treating political facts in as directly experimental a method as chemical facts, they are showing themselves true Baconians, and proving their adversaries to be mere syllogisers and schoolmen. As, however, the notion of the applicability of experimental methods to political philosophy cannot coexist with any just conception of these methods themselves, the kind of arguments from experience which the chemical theory brings forth as its fruits (and which form the staple, in this country especially, of Parliamentary and hustings oratory) are such as, at no time since Bacon, would have been admitted to be valid in chemistry itself, or in any other branch of experimental science. They are such as these: that the prohibition of foreign commodities must conduce to national wealth, because

England has flourished under it, or because countries in general which have adopted it have flourished; that our laws, or our internal administration, or our constitution, are excellent for a similar reason: and the eternal arguments from historical examples, from Athens or Rome, from the fires in Smithfield or the French Revolution. I will not waste time in contending against modes of argumentation which no person, with the smallest practice in estimating evidence, could possibly be betrayed into; which draw conclusions of general appreciation from a single unanalyzed instance, or arbitrarily refer an effect to some one among its antecedents, without any process of elimination or comparison of instances.—*Logic*, pp. 458–59.

I call this fallacy one of the greatest difficulties of modern politics because it is the readiest tool of demagogues, and to the popular eye the most attractive because the easiest solution of pending troubles. The most effective argument of the American protectionists is, that as the United States have prospered under protection, the tariff must be the one cause of the prosperity; that as Ireland and Turkey are poor under free trade, their condition shows the danger of throwing open home markets to foreign producers. So, also, we are now afflicted with tons of useless silver coin owing to the popular belief that the slowness of our recovery from the crisis of 1873 was simply and solely the demonetization of silver in the same year. France and Spain and the Spanish-American Republics, says Sir Henry Maine, have popular governments—that is, parliaments elected by a widely extended suffrage. But they have also frequent rebellions; therefore Popular Government is both unstable, and the cause of its instability. It may be that Popular Government in a given country is fragile, but surely we are not justified in assuming that the character, the religion, the culture, the manners, the history, and the material surroundings of the people have nothing to do with the security of their political institutions; or that, in considering whether a new form of government will suit them, we are not called upon to ask how they got on under the old one; whether, for instance, the French were happy and content under absolute monarchy, and the Spanish-Americans peaceful and industrious under the Viceroys and the Bishops.

So completely does Sir Henry Maine commit himself to the Chemical Method that he boldly declares that "the inferences which might be drawn from the stability of the government of the United States are much weakened, if not destroyed, by the remarkable spectacle furnished by the numerous Republics set up from the Mexican border-line to the Straits of Magellan." He notices, it is true, the objection to his theory drawn from the fact that the inhabitants of the Spanish-American Republics are to a great extent of Indian blood and have been trained in Roman Catholicism, but he gets over it by announcing that "such arguments would be intelligible if they were used by persons who maintain that a highly special and exceptional political education is essential to the successful practice of Popular Government; but they proceed from those who believe that there is at least a strong presumption in favor of democratic institutions everywhere."

But why must this argument be used only by persons who believe that a highly specialized and exceptional political education is necessary for the successful practice of Popular Government? Why is it not good in the mouths of those who believe simply that Indian blood and Roman Catholic training are serious obstacles to the practice of Popular Government? Why may it not be used by those who believe that the United States Government is largely indebted for its stability, not to the fact that the American people have had a highly special and exceptional political education, but to the fact that they are mainly of Anglo-Saxon blood, and have been trained in Protestantism? And why, in the name of Aristotle, is an argument made unintelligible by the fact that some of those who use it also use other arguments which are feeble? Surely, if I sometimes reason *à priori* about politics, that does not make my inductive reasoning worthless.

For my part, I think the example of the United States all important, even from Sir Henry Maine's point of view, for they are the one country in the world in which Popular Government, as he defines it, really exists. They are the one country, that is to say, governed by universal suffrage in which the great mass of the voters have a realizing sense of the fact that the government is their servant and not their master, and that it exists simply to carry out the ideas of the "plain people" who compose the bulk of the community, and not those of a small but more cultivated and more enlightened class; a government, in short, as Lincoln expressed it, "of the people, by the people, for the people." It may be that their example is sometimes cited by disputants whom consistency or some other obligation forbids to cite it. It may be, too, that inferences drawn from it would not be good against every assailant of Popular Government; but as against Sir Henry Maine they are, as it seems to me, good in anybody's hands. He is, in fact, estopped by his refusal to take into account anything but the instability of the government in France and Spain and the South American Republics, from taking into account anything but the stability of the government in the case of the United

States. If the Chemical Method be good for one, it is good for the other.

Sir Henry Maine's manner of elucidating the effects of universal suffrage controlled by wire-pullers on social and intellectual progress is even more remarkable than his manner of proving the fragility of Popular Government. He says:

> Such a suffrage (a widely extended and universal suffrage) is commonly associated with Radicalism; no doubt amid its most certain effects would be the extensive destruction of the existing institutions; but the chances are that in the long run it would produce a mischievous form of Conservatism, and drug society with a potion compared with which Eldonine would be a salutary draught. For to what end, toward what ideal state, is the process of stamping upon law the average opinion of an entire community directed? The end arrived at is identical with that of the Roman Catholic Church, which attributes a similar sacredness to the average opinion of the Christian world. "Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus" was the canon of Vincent of Lerins. "Securus judicat orbis terrarum" were the words which rang in the ears of Newman, and produced such marvellous effects on him. But did any one in his senses ever suppose that these were maxims of progress? The principles of legislation at which they point would put an end to all social and political activities, and arrest everything which has ever been associated with Liberalism. A moment's reflection will satisfy any competently instructed person that this is not too broad a proposition. Let him turn over in his mind the great epochs of scientific invention and social change during the last two centuries,

and consider what would have occurred if universal suffrage had been established at any one of them. Universal suffrage which to-day excludes free-trade from the United States would certainly have prohibited the spinning-jenny and the power-loom. It would certainly have forbidden the thrashing-machine. It would have forbidden the adoption of the Gregorian Calendar, and would have restored the Stuarts (p. 36).

A few sentences before this he has acknowledged that the world has had only a very brief experience of wide suffrage—that is, about fifty years in the United States and about twenty in France—but, brief as it is, it ought to have furnished him with specific instances in support of this very dark view of the future of West European society. He was able to infer from the example of France and Spain and the Spanish-American Republics that Popular Government would be fragile. It seems to me that he ought to have been able to infer from the same source that it would be hostile to civilization. Strange to say, however, on this point he does not argue; he contents himself with prophesying, and it is one of the commonplaces of rhetoric that you cannot refute a prophet. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that he guesses, using the word in its English rather than in its American sense. For what other name can we give to an assertion that "the chances are" that, if a certain thing had happened long before it did happen, a certain other thing would have happened, which, as a matter of fact, has never happened at all? In no place has universal suffrage "put an end to all social and political activities or arrested everything which has been associated with Liberalism." In no place has it ever shown a tendency to do so. In no place has it ever done anything like prohibiting a spinning-jenny or the power-loom or the thrashing-machine, or preventing the adoption of the Gregorian Calendar. Nevertheless, Sir Henry Maine makes the extremely broad proposition that it would have done so had it had the opportunity. I have searched as carefully as I can for the basis of these very extraordinary deductions. As well as I can make out, it consists simply in his opinion that in a democratic community the embodiment of public opinion in legislation would result in giving the law the sanctity which in the Catholic Church is attributed to the consensus of the Christian world on points of doctrine. Admitting it to be true that the general opinion embodied in a statute would give the statute in democratic eyes the sacredness of a Catholic dogma, whence do we draw the conclusion that it would also have the permanence of a dogma?

There is, in fact, just enough evidence to show (Sir Henry Maine says) that even now there is a marked antagonism between democratic opinion and scientific truth applied to human societies. The central seat in all political economy was from the first occupied by the Theory of Population. This theory has now been generalized by Mr. Darwin and his followers, and, stated as the principle of the survival of the fittest, it has become the central truth of all biological science. Yet it is evidently disliked by the multitude and thrust into the background by those whom the multitude permits to lead it. It has long been intensely unpopular in France and on the continent of Europe, and among ourselves proposals for recognizing it through the relief of distress by emigration are visibly being supplanted by schemes founded on the assumption that, through legislative experiments on society, a given space of land may always be made to support in comfort the population which from historical causes has come to be settled on it (p. 37).

As "just enough evidence" to show that there is even now "a marked antagonism between democratic opinion and scientific truth as applied to human societies," the above is very remarkable. I believe the doctrine of the survival of the fittest has, as a matter of fact, met with even fiercer opposition from the religious well-to-do middle class and from the clergy than from the unfortunate "multitude." But it is a doctrine which must needs be unpopular—if unpopular means disagreeable—with all but the very successful, that is, with the great majority of the human race. The survival of the fittest has ever been and must ever be an odious sight to the unfit or the less fit, who see that they cannot survive. Sir Henry Maine's reproach, that they do not accept it cheerfully reminds one of Frederick the Great's savage reproof to his flying troops, "Hunde, wollte ihr ewig leben?" In asking the multitude to take to it kindly, Sir Henry asks something which has always been beyond human powers. There is no doctrine with which the race is more familiar in practice than the doctrine that the strongest must have the best of it, which is really Darwin's doctrine expressed in terms of politics. The progress of civilization under all forms of government has consisted simply in making such changes in the environment of the multitude as will increase the number of the fittest. That it has been well to strive for this end; that it has been well to try to make a country like England a place in which twenty-eight millions can dwell in comfort on soil which seventy years ago only supported ten millions in comparative misery, has been for ages the opinion of the wisest and best men under the old monarchies. Possibly they were wrong. Possibly it ought to have been the policy of rulers not only to see that the fittest survived, but that their number was kept down. But is it not asking too much of the multitude to ask them to take a totally new view of the conditions of man's struggle with nature?

The great aim of the political art has hitherto been to protect man in some degree from the remorseless working of the laws of the physical universe, to save him from cold, from heat, from savage beasts, from the unwillingness of the earth to yield him her fruits and the sea its fish. All its successes have to some extent increased the number of the fittest. It has filled West Europe with a population which conservative observers like Sir Henry Maine two centuries ago would certainly have declared it incapable of maintaining. Can we possibly expect Democracy to give up the game as soon as it comes into power, and bid the weaklings of the race prepare for extinction? Emigration, which he treats as an acceptance of the Darwinian doctrine, is, of course, in reality simply a transfer of the struggle for survival to another arena. The law of population works everywhere, and with increasing severity, other things being equal, as the population increases. Sending the unfit to New Zealand or Dakota is not a whit more scientific than sending them to till English moors. There is no escape for them anywhere from the battle with the fittest; but any abandonment of the effort to protract their existence and make it more tolerable would mean the stoppage of civilization itself. Democracy may make mistakes in this work, and may attempt more than it can accomplish, but energy in the work and devotion to it is after all what distinguishes a civilized community from a savage one. There is no more reason why the bulk of the race should fold its arms in the presence of the theory of population than in the presence of the great fact of mortality. How many people a given piece of land will maintain and comfort, whether only the number settled on it by "historical causes" or a larger one, is something which can be only ascertained by intelligent experiment. All causes, too, which settle a man on a farm become "historical" after a while; but whether it is well for him to remain there is something only to be learned by experience. The theory of population does not necessarily prescribe emigration when people begin to find it hard to get a living off the land on which they were born, or on which they have settled, but it does prescribe better modes of cultivation and smaller families.

I am not prepared to argue that democratic societies will always accept the conclusions of science with meekness and submission. One sees, I admit, in our own time a good deal to warrant the fear that democratic ignorance will fight unpleasant and inconvenient truths with the pertinacity with which monarchical and aristocratic ignorance has always fought them; and that they will have to owe their triumph in the future, as they have owed it in the past, not to any particular distribution of the political sovereignty, but to the intellectual impulse which has carried the race out of the woods and the caves, and given it its great discoverers and inventors.

But I am very curious to know why Sir Henry Maine should have overlooked the experience of the only really democratic community now existing, that of the Northern States of the American Union, on this point. As a matter of fact, there never has been any society in which new discoveries and inventions and new theories of the art of living have been received with so much readiness as in these States; and they are the countries in which the dominating opinion is most distinctly that of the multitude, in which legislation most distinctly embodies both the prejudices and weakness of the multitude, and in which there is least respect for authority. I think I might safely appeal to American men of science to say whether they do not suffer in reputation and influence with the people, for not making more and greater calls on their faith or credulity; or, in other words, for their slowness rather than for their haste in making and accepting discoveries. The fertility of Americans in inventions—that is, in the production of new machines and new processes—great as it is, is not so remarkable as the eagerness with which the people receive them and use them. The large number of medical quacks who infest the country, and their great success in the sale of their nostrums—the like of which I think can be seen nowhere else—is undoubtedly due to a sort of impatience with the caution and want of enterprise of the regular practitioners. The kind of fame which came to Edison after he had made some improvements in the electric light and invented the phonograph, was a very good illustration of the respect of American people for the novel and the marvellous. For a good while he was hailed as a man to whom any problem in physics would be simple, and he was consulted on a variety of subjects to which he had given no attention, such as the means of diminishing the noise of the trains on the elevated railroads in the streets of this city. In fact, for a year or two, he held the position—doubtless to his own amusement—of a "medicine man," to whom any mystery was easy.

Are there, then, no signs in this American democracy of tendencies in the direction which Sir Henry Maine predicts or guesses at—that is, of the emancipation of the people from the control or influence of science, or scientific men, or of a disposition to go back to the rule of thumb in the art of living? As I am not posing here as a champion of Popular Government, or indeed as anything but a humble inquirer into the reasons why Sir Henry Maine wrote his book, I can have no difficulty in answering this question with candor and explicitness.

No observer of American politics can deny that, with regard to matters which can become the subject of legislation, the American voter listens with extreme impatience to anything which has the air of instruction; but the reason is to be found not in his dislike of instruction so much as his dislike in the political field of anything which savors of superiority. The passion for equality is one of the very strongest influences in American politics. This is so fully recognized now by politicians that self-depreciation, even in the matter of knowledge, has become one of the ways of commending one's self to the multitude, which even the foremost men of both parties do not disdain. In talking on such subjects as the currency, with a view of enlightening the people, skilful orators are very careful to repudiate all pretence of knowing anything more about the matter than their hearers. The speech is made to wear as far as possible the appearance of being simply a reproduction of things with which the audience is just as familiar as the speaker. Nothing is more fatal to a stump orator than an air of superior wisdom on any subject. He has, if he means to persuade, to keep carefully, in outward seeming at all events, on the same intellectual level as those whom he is addressing. Orators of a demagogic turn, of course, push this caution to its extreme, and often affect ignorance, and boast of the smallness of the educational opportunities enjoyed by them in their youth, and of the extreme difficulty they had in acquiring even the little they know. There is nothing, in fact, people are less willing to tolerate in a man who seeks office at their hands than any sign that he does not consider himself as belonging to the same class as the bulk of the voters—that either birth, or fortune, or education has taken him out of sympathy with them, or caused him, in any sense, to look down on them.

That this has a tendency to make political speaking in this country, especially of late years, remarkably uninstructive, uninteresting, and a poor educational agency, there is no denying. Anyone who judged of the capacity and intelligence of the American voters by the pabulum supplied to them on the stump would certainly be excusable in taking a dark view of the future of American democracy.

The truth seems to be that with regard to all matters within the field of politics the new democracy is extremely sensitive about any doubts of its competency. It will not suffer any question, or sign of question, of its full capacity to deal with any matter which calls for legislation. It is ready enough to base legislation on investigations and reports; but the investigations and reports must be made in its name and by its authority through what it calls "practical men" as distinguished from scientific or professorial men. By practical men, it means men engaged in some industrial or money-making pursuit, like the bulk of the community, and making no pretence to book-learning or theoretical knowledge. What men of this class, who have succeeded in business, say on any subject calling for political action, counts for much more in the United States with the voters than what specialists or learned men say. There is, in fact, an inordinate respect for the opinions on all subjects of "successful business men"—that is, men who from small beginnings have made fortunes by their own exertions. But this is not more wonderful in an industrial community than the reverence in a military community for a great soldier—than the prolonged belief in England, for instance, in the political wisdom of the Duke of Wellington for many years after Waterloo.

With matters of a quasi-scientific kind, like the tariff, for instance, or the currency, on which the opinions of theorists are extremely important and "practical men" very likely to be wrong, this habit of excluding science from all say in the political arena, is undoubtedly very unfortunate. But it does not have the effect that Sir Henry Maine would expect from it. It sometimes leads to the embodiment in legislation of gross errors and delusions, but it never leads to the conversion of an error or delusion into a sacred dogma. It leads to costly and useless experimentation and to the trial of schemes which have failed a hundred times before in other places and ages. It is rare, indeed, that an economic or other fallacy connected with legislation, which has once taken hold of the popular mind in this country, can be overthrown by the attacks of authority or of historical experience. In fact, the intervention of the professors to expose it, is very apt to hasten its conversion into law, if only for the purpose of showing the literary men that they must not meddle in politics.

But the experiment once tried, there is nothing anywhere like the readiness of the public here to acknowledge failure in the frankest way. The orators and editors go through the process of "owning up," with extraordinary, and some might say cynical, cheerfulness. Some of the most furious newspaper advocates of Bland's Silver Bill are now its most strenuous opponents. Everything which the theorists predicted of its working has come to pass, but it would never have done to allow theorists to suppose that their talk would turn the people from its purpose, or influence law-making. In truth, that most marked characteristic of the American commercial character—its readiness to abandon things which do not pay, and its unwillingness to spend any time crying over spilt milk—shows itself just as prominently in politics as in business. There is not the smallest sign of the bigoted conservatism which Sir Henry Maine looks for. The legislative history of every State in the Union is full of illustrations of the people's openness to conviction, provided the conviction be wrought by processes which they can understand. Nothing is sacred in America, and nothing elicits so much ridicule as an attempt to put anything or any person into the category of the unchangeable or unapproachable.

But, outside of politics, authority occupies a very different place. The scientific or literary man who addresses the people without any design of directly influencing their political action, or making his opinions felt in legislation, nowhere receives a more attentive hearing. The success of instructive lectures in this country, though greater some years ago than now, is still greater than anywhere else in the world. Scientific men, working in their own fields, are nowhere so widely known and respected by the masses. I do not need to speak of the wide diffusion in the United States of the reading habit. A large proportion of it—by far too large a portion of it perhaps—is devoted to newspapers, which have their bad side, on which I will not dwell here. But they have one effect which makes any growth of ignorant conservatism, or any barbarous dislike of novelty, simply impossible. They fill every corner of the land with some knowledge of what is going on everywhere else. They tell the people something about every famous man in the world, and about the things which have made him famous. They familiarize them with every new idea or discovery. They, in short, prevent mental stagnation. By keeping people curious about the world outside their village, they keep them in a state of mental receptivity.

I might illustrate these things at considerable length, if I had not taken up so much space. But I shall, in closing, point out that one of Sir Henry Maine's examples of popular bigotry—the hostility of the United States to free trade—shows a singular ignorance of the exact nature of the tariff controversy in this country. The tariff is not a purely fiscal question here, and for that reason the difficulty of getting Americans to take a scientific view of it is greatly increased.

In the first place, the possession of a continent containing nearly every variety of soil, climate, and product greatly diminishes the force with which the free-trade doctrine, that trade consists in the interchange of the results of special natural advantages, strikes the American mind. No other country can say that it finds within its own borders the means, as far as soil and climate are concerned, of producing nearly everything it buys from foreigners. In the next place, the prohibition of customs duties between the States has given a larger area to free trade here than exists anywhere else, and has thus in a remarkable degree lessened the pinch of protection. Lastly, the enormous immigration—nearly a million a year—of consumers and producers, in the very prime of life, is constantly making new markets, which for many years postponed the glut which is now putting the high tariff in so much peril. The effect of this, in impeding the free-trade agitation, has been very like the effect of opening a small foreign State every year to American goods. In short, anybody who imagines that the free-trade argument presents itself to the American voter in the neat compact shape in which Cobden and Bright were able to offer it to the British public in 1846, or in which

Fawcett was able to offer it in 1880, is greatly mistaken. The American voter, though much deluded about the tariff, is not deluded to the same degree or in the same way as the British fair-trader. He has never had a notion that, as people say here, he could lift himself by his own boot-straps, or make money by swapping jack-knives. His vast reserve of waste lands has always been in his mind, something for a tariff to work on which no other nation possessed.

SOME POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF THE TARIFF

A TARIFF, in so far as it is intended to be protective, is a tax levied on the community to indemnify a certain number of persons for their losses in carrying on certain kinds of business; or, rather, if any one likes it better, to furnish them with a fair profit in certain kinds of business. There is, perhaps, no tax which may not be properly submitted to the popular judgment, if it be submitted in its true shape, without disguise. This requires a distinct definition both of its object and of its amount. This rule is rigidly applied to all taxes except the protective tax. It is applied rigidly in all appropriations for the expenses of the Government, such as the salaries of its civil and military servants, the cost of the navy, of fortifications, of the river and harbor improvements, of the public buildings, of subventions to railroads, and of the redemption of the public debt. For none of these things is an appropriation either left indefinite in amount or hidden away in another for entirely different objects. But in voting funds for the creation or promotion of certain branches of industry, the rule is totally disregarded.

In the first place, the money levied on the taxpayer for this purpose is mixed up with the money levied for the general expenses of the Government. How much of the taxes goes for the protection of native industry is never known or specified, and no pains are taken to find it out. One may really approve of a protective tax, and yet be totally unable to approve of any tax levied in this way for any purpose whatever. Granting that it is expedient for the Government to spend money in the maintenance or the promotion of the iron manufacture, for example, it must be expedient, also, for the public to know the exact amount which it costs annually; just as it is expedient that the public should know exactly how much the army and navy costs, or how much the annual improvement of rivers and harbors costs. No view, however broad, of the province of government can furnish an excuse for concealing the expense of any great national undertaking. The question "how much," is a question which every taxpayer has a right to ask as regards all branches of the public expenditure, and which every Secretary of the Treasury ought to be able to answer. There is not a single good reason for concealing the national expenditure in protection, any more than for concealing the national expenditure in anything else. But there is no trace of this expenditure in the national accounts. Everybody knows that it must be large, but nobody knows how large. The only sources of information on this subject are the guesses made in free-trade books and pamphlets, which, of course, possess but little authority in the popular eye. The debates between free-traders and protectionists on this point are the most bewildering part of the controversy. Every now and then a free-trader, home or foreign, undertakes to foot up the amount of the contributions which American consumers, and especially the farmers, make to the maintenance of the various branches of domestic industry. Such attempts always excite great indignation among protectionists. A pamphlet containing calculations of this sort, by an Englishman named Montgredien, was published in this country a few years ago, and has been denounced by various protectionist writers with great bitterness, as if it were a sort of impertinent prying into somebody's private affairs. I dare say it was incorrect. I do not, indeed, see how such calculations can come anywhere near correctness. But what a curious state of mind about the national finances that is, which treats as illicit all efforts to discover the exact amount of the national outlay, on what is, admittedly, an object of the highest national importance.

Next, it must be said that any fund of large amount, raised and distributed in this way, must of necessity prove a corruption fund. By this, I do not mean a fund distributed in bribes to individuals or organizations, but a fund the existence of which must be constantly present to the mind of the lazy, the improvident, or incompetent, as something to fall back on if the worst come to the worst. Suppose the national appropriations for the purpose of protecting manufacturing industry were made in the ordinary way by a distinct vote of Congress; were made, for instance, as the appropriations for the promotion of the carrying trade—the steamship subsidies, as they are called—are made, in the shape of an annual maximum sum. Suppose this sum were paid over to the corporations, or individuals, engaged in each manufacture, on their giving proof that they were carrying on a bonâ-fide business. Suppose that to each were given as much as would meet the loss, as shown by his books, incurred by him in competing with foreigners in the home markets. I am not advocating this. Any one can see its difficulties. I acknowledge how much less troublesome it is to protect by levying duties on foreign goods at the port of entry. But the political objections to the protective system, as now administered, cannot be made so clear in any way as by inquiring how the plan of distributing the money directly by the public Treasury would work.

The measure of each manufacturer's needs would, of course, be the amount lost in his business through foreign competition. It would hardly be possible to restrict the number of participators in the bounty, because one of its great objects would be the multiplication of manufactures. We should have to invite as many people as possible to set up mills and furnaces, and then to come to us for help. But see what an amount of inspection we should need to prevent the distribution of the fund becoming a gross job. It would be impossible, for instance, to pay the subsidy or indemnity on a simple statement of the loss sustained. We should have to inquire *how* the loss was sustained; whether really by foreign competition, or by lax or inefficient or dishonest methods of doing business; whether by simple misfortune, or insufficiency of capital, or want of experience. We would never consent that the Treasury should furnish insurance against loss from any cause whatever; that the same measure should be dealt out to the idle, the improvident, and the slow, as to the industrious, the energetic, and the ingenious. No government would undertake to help in the same degree, through direct subsidies, every one who chose to go into the iron or cotton business. It would investigate and discriminate. It would not treat all men's complaints as equally respectable. Indiscriminate protection, if it were given directly, would speedily be felt to have all the evils of indiscriminate charity. A manufacturer who said, "I am not able to go on with my business and must have more state aid," would be met in the same way as a man who said, "I must have relief, because I have got no money." The latter, before receiving relief, would surely be asked: "Why have you no money? Is it because you are lazy, or because you are unfortunate?" In like manner, the manufacturer who demanded more protection, simply because the amount received was not sufficient to save him from bankruptcy, would be asked: "Why is the amount you receive insufficient? Is it the fault of the market, or your own lack of fitness for the business in which you have engaged? In the former case you are entitled to relief. In the latter it would be a waste of the taxpayers' money, and a waste of your own life, to start you again."

That such a system could long prevail in any country without damage to the moral constitution of those who were benefited by it, all experience of human nature forbids us to expect. The effect of the possession of money, or of a rich father, on a young professional man, is well known. It is only the men of very strong character who make their mark in spite of it. In all walks in life, indeed, it is generally those who have burnt their bridges who make the stiffest fight. Manufacturers would need to be more than human to make the very best use of their faculties, while knowing that they had in Congress a protector of boundless wealth and indulgence, who, when the allowance was exhausted, asked only one question, namely, how much more was needed?

Looking at the protective system, as it now exists, from the side of legislation, the political objections to it under our form of government are still stronger. The only governments fitted to deal with votes of money of an indefinite amount, for an ill-defined purpose, if any be fitted, are governments of the parliamentary type, in which the finances are managed by a responsible minister, and all the appropriations collected in a systematic whole called the budget. Even in such hands, the support of industry, through indirect taxation, is open to immense abuse. But such a minister, responsible to the public for the whole financial system, can make some attempt to reconcile the conflicting claims of the great industries. Under our system—the presidential system, as it is called—

nobody in particular is responsible for the financial scheme of the year. There is, in fact, no official scheme, in the strict sense of the term, submitted to Congress. The Secretary of the Treasury puts into his report a mass of multifarious information about the public finances, but the recommendations with which he follows it up are rarely heeded by the Legislature. The real work of what is called in other countries a Minister of Finance, is done by a committee of the House of Representatives, which makes the first draft of the appropriation bills. But these bills, including the tariff bill, never pass the House in the shape in which they are drawn up, or in anything approaching to it. Each member feels himself fully entitled to propose, and, if he can, to carry, modifications in them; so that when a bill is finally passed it is generally impossible for any one, in or out of the House, to say who its author is. So numerous are the influences which are brought to bear on the framing of it, that the most powerful of them is hardly ever known. The committee is beset by hundreds of manufacturers from all parts of the country, representing every variety of industry, and each claiming to be the final authority on his own subject. Each, too, demands that Congress shall either alter, or shall *not* alter, the duty on some particular article of foreign importation, and supports his demand with an array of figures, the correctness of which nobody attempts to dispute, if for no other reason, for want of time. Failure to influence the committee, too, rarely discourages any tariff lobbyist. He transfers his labors to the House, and attacks the bill through individual members, who, being generally much more ignorant of the subject than the members of the committee, fall an easy prey to him. The general result is apt to be that the bill, as finally passed, has but little, if any, resemblance to the bill as it issued from the committee-room. It is often, when examined, found to be something very different in its operation, not only from what its first projectors intended it to be, but from what everybody else, at the end, thought that it really was. There is hardly a more pitiable spectacle in politics than the vexation and amazement of the country, after a new tariff bill has been passed, over the discovery that nobody can tell what its effect on industry is likely to prove.

There is, however, one other reason of the unfitness of Congress for the proper working of our protective system besides the absence of a responsible ministry charged with the management of the finances. It has been the American policy from the beginning, and a wise policy, to provide, by paying the members, that the legislatures of the country shall be a fair representation of the plain people who compose the bulk of the population. The bulk of the population has but little money, but is keenly alive to the use of money, and eagerly engaged in the pursuit of it. We send to the Legislature, both State and Federal, men who are generally poor and generally honest when they go there, but not unwilling to be rich if a respectable occasion offers, and are very apt to have their imagination touched by the history and condition of millionaires. In plain and simple communities, such as two or three of the New England States still remain, in which capital is scarce and great capitalists unknown, the relation of these legislators to their constituency leaves little to be desired. But in States in which great accumulations of wealth have taken place, in which capitalists frequently have great favors to ask of the State, and in which legislators are constantly called on to deal with measures which contain, or are thought to contain, as Johnson said of the Thrale brewery, "the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice," these relations leave a great deal to be desired. The belief of the great capitalists in the venality of legislators in some States, if not in many, is well known, and is one of the most unpleasant political phenomena of the day. In fact, they make hardly an attempt to conceal it. I have never talked with one who had ever found himself in the power of a State Legislature, or had to ask anything of it which seriously affected his interests, who was afraid to avow his belief that the members were venal, or who did not pretend to hold proofs of their venality; who had not stories to tell, either of his having to pay in order to get what he sought, or of his having to pay in order to escape a tax on what he possessed already. In the New York Legislature, certainly, the practice of introducing bills simply for the purpose of frightening rich men, or "striking them," as it is called, is by no means uncommon. Nor is the practice unknown of delaying the passage of measures in which rich men are interested, until they are forced to inquire what it is that stops the way. One hears the same stories for all States in which there are large corporations or great capitalists exposed in any manner to legislative action. Doubtless there is in all this much exaggeration, but any one who is determined to gain his ends with the State government through corruption, is pretty sure, if he cannot succeed, at all events to find many ways of spending money in the attempt.

All this is an illustration of the growth of a political evil which is both novel and peculiar to our time. In all past states of society with which we have any acquaintance, the governing class has been the wealthy class. The military or feudal states were ruled by the men who had the most land. The great commercial republics, like Venice and Genoa, were ruled by the men who had the most money. It is in our day and generation, and in this country, that the Government has for the first time, both in its legislative and administrative branches, passed into the hands of the poor, in a rich community. I say the poor in a rich community, for there have been states before now in which poor men filled all the offices; but these were states, such as some of the Swiss cantons, in which the rulers and ruled were, as regards this world's goods, pretty much on a level, and in which the absence of temptation made it easy for everybody to be virtuous. Here, on the other hand, we are trying the novel experiment of governing a commercial community, during a period of rapidly growing wealth, by the instrumentality of men without fortunes. This will probably, hereafter, continue, for better, for worse, to be the democratic way. No other way is possible. The rule of the many must always be the rule of the comparatively poor, and, in this age of the world, the poor have ceased to be content with their poverty. They seek wealth, and, in times when wealth is accumulating rapidly, they seek it eagerly. We cannot change this state of things. We must face the problem as it is presented to us. That problem is, I do not hesitate to say, the great problem of government in every civilized country —how to keep wealth in subjection to law; how to prevent its carrying elections, putting its creatures on the judicial bench, or putting fleets and armies in motion in order to push usurious bonds up to par.

There is only one way of meeting this difficulty. We cannot at will put down corruption by a sudden increase of human virtue. In other words, we cannot protect legislators against wealthy speculators, by making them either suddenly purer, or more contented. The way to arm them against temptation is to leave them as little as possible to sell of the things which capitalists are eager to buy.

I do not mean to say that the tariff has produced, or is producing, definite, ascertainable, or provable corruption, in Congress; that is, that manufacturers go down to Washington and pay members for raising the duty on this, or not lowering it on that. But I do say that the state of things is vicious through which Congress has the chance every year of increasing or lessening the incomes of thousands of rich men, of threatening to ruin great industrial enterprises or largely to increase their profits, and this through changes in legislation so slight as not to be perceptible to the great mass of the public, yet so intricate as to be comprehensible only to a small portion of it. Every time the tariff comes under discussion—and it comes under it every year—hundreds of wealthy corporations or individuals either fear a loss or expect a gain. This puts every member of Congress in the position toward them of a possible enemy or a possible benefactor; in the one case to be bought off, in the other to be rewarded. The lobby which looks after the tariff every winter in the protectionists' interest is not composed of speculative economists, occupied with the effect of legislation on the general weal. It is composed of shrewd, practical business men, engaged in procuring or hindering legislation which will increase or diminish their bank account by an amount which they can readily figure out, and which, if called on, they freely submit to the committees.

The protectionist answer to much of what is said with regard to the changeableness of congressional policy about the tariff is, chiefly, that if the tariff were not attacked incessantly by free-traders and their allies, in one disguise or another, these changes would never take place. If, in short, the people who are hostile to the protective system would refrain from criticising the tariff in which it is embodied, there would be as much stability in the policy of the Government with regard to import duties as any one could desire. Unfortunately, however, tariffs have to be made for the community, such as it is, and not as protectionists would desire to see it. There has always been in this country a considerable body of persons who are opposed to any protection at all; there is another body, also considerable, opposed to high protection. As long as speech is free they will continue to exert an influence, more or less pronounced, upon Congress and the voters. If they do not always have their way in legislation, they are always able, at every election, to diffuse among manufacturers the fear that they will have it. The effect of this fear on business is, manufacturers say, almost as prejudicial as active legislation.

The problem which protectionists have to solve, therefore, touching the relations of the Government to industry in this country, would seem to be the production of a tariff which nobody will attack—a very difficult task, we must all admit, if it is to be such a tariff as extreme protectionists really desire. As long as there exists, about the amount of protection needed, the doubt and mystery which we now witness; as long as the classes for whose protection the tariff is intended are as numerous and as clamorous as they now are, it will be impossible to satisfy them all by any protective tariff whatever. There is only one rule known to us by which a tariff can really be measured and defended. If the principle of raising duties for revenue only were once adopted, every one would know at a glance how high the tariff ought to be. There might be disputes about the distribution of its burdens among different commodities, but there would be none about the sum it ought to bring in. If there were in any year a surplus, every one would agree that the tariff ought to be lowered. If there were a deficit, every one would agree that it ought to be raised. We should thus, at least, get rid of the perennial contention about the weight of the duties, and we should no longer be dependent for stability on the wisdom of Congress.

Now, let me consider another, and, from a social point of view, perhaps the most important, aspect of the tariff question. Can any one find, in the work of any American author, or in the speech of any American orator—I mean, of the free States —prior to the civil war, any intimation that we should have, fully developed on American soil, within the present century, what has long been known in Europe as "the labor question?" Of course, we can all recall that sometime famous letter of Lord Macaulay's, in which he predicted the speedy triumph in this country of poverty over property, and the periodical division among the have-nots of the goods and chattels of the haves. But some of us can remember, too, the mocking and proud incredulity with which that dismal prediction was received. He was told, in hundreds of newspaper articles, that European experience furnished no proper materials for forecasting the economical future of the United States; that no such division of classes as he foresaw could take place here. I do not need to say that his predictions have not been fulfilled, and are never likely to be. I am one of those, too, who believe firmly that property will always, in every country, be able to take care of itself. It will always have the superiority in physical force, as well as in intelligence on its side. The great bulk of the population is, in every country, and above all, in this, composed of those who have property or expect to have it; and so it will always be, as long as our civilization lasts. But certainly, all the answers to Macaulay have not stood the test of time and experience. In 1860 nobody here was seriously troubled by the condition or expectations of the working classes. In fact, Americans were not in the habit of thinking of working-men as a class at all. An American citizen who wrought with his hands in any calling was looked on, like other American citizens, as a man who had his fortunes in his own keeping, and whose judgment alone decided in what manner they could be improved. Nobody thought of him as being in a special degree the protégé of the State. In fact, the idea that he had a special and peculiar claim on State protection was generally treated as a piece of Gallic folly, over which Anglo-Saxons could well afford to smile. There was no mention of the free laborer in political platforms at that day, except as an illustration to Southern slave-holders of the blessings of which their pride and folly deprived their own society.

We have changed all this very much. Under the stimulation of the war tariff, not only has there been an enormous amount of capital invested in industrial enterprises of various sorts; not only have mills and furnaces and mines and protected interests of all sorts greatly multiplied, but there has appeared in great force, and for the first time on American soil, the dependent, State-managed laborer of Europe, who declines to take care of himself in the old American fashion. When he is out of work, or does not like his work, he looks about, and asks his fellow-citizens sullenly, if not menacingly, what they are going to do about it. He has brought with him, too, what is called "the labor problem," probably the most un-American of all the problems which American society has to work over to-day. The American pulpit and the American press are now hammering away at it steadily. Commissions, both State and Federal, are nearly every year appointed to collect facts bearing on it, and working-men are invited to come before them and explain it. Popular attention to it is stimulated by occasional riots and huge strikes, in which thousands take part, and which every now and then strain to the uttermost the State powers of protecting life and property. Its leading features are, however, well known. The rate of wages paid in the protective industries is seldom as high as working-men think they ought to have, and is often, if not most of the time, greater than their employers think they can afford to pay. And then employment in these industries is somewhat precarious. Every now and then there is a reduction, or a lock-out, simply because the protected market is not good enough. In fact, we have to-day before our eyes, at all the great centres of industry, as they are called—at the mills and mines and furnaces—most of the phenomena which "the pauper labor of Europe" now furnishes for the perplexity of European statesmen and philanthropists. Nor must I be told that this is an exceptional state of things, arising out of a brief and transient depression of industry. It has lasted from 1873, with a very brief interval of two years, until the present year.

Now, this labor problem, which so many statesmen and philanthropists and economists are trying their teeth on, is every day made more difficult, every day further removed from solution, by that fatal lesson of government responsibility for the condition of a particular class of a community, which every believer in high tariffs, every manufacturer who depends on the tariff, is compelled to preach. Of all the novelties which the last twenty-five years have introduced into American politics and society, decidedly the most dangerous is the practice of telling large bodies of ignorant and excitable voters at every election that their daily bread depends not on their own capacity or industry or ingenuity, or on the capacity or industry or ingenuity of their employers, but on the good-will of the Legislature, or, worse still, on the good-will of the Administration. In other words, the "tariff issue," as it is called in every canvass, is an issue filled with the seeds of social trouble and perplexity. Anything less American and more imperialist than the regular quadrennial proclamation that if the presidential election results in a certain way the foundations will be knocked from under American industry, the factories closed, and the workers thrown out of employment, could hardly be conceived. And yet, as long as a large number of industries exist through the tariff, and could not exist without it, and men's eyes are turned, whenever there is a depression in business, not to the market of the world or to the resources of their own ingenuity, but to the lobbies of the Capitol, this announcement is inevitable. Every canvass thus becomes a lesson in dependence on the State. It becomes a sort of formal acknowledgment by the leading men of both political parties, that one class of the community, at least, is composed of governmental protégés; for the party which denies that its coming into power will derange industry makes this acknowledgment, just as effectually as the party which brings the charge.

The truth is, that the first field ever offered for seeing what the freedom of the individual could accomplish, in the art of growing rich and of diversifying industry, was offered on this continent. It was blessed with the greatest variety of soil and climate, with the finest ports and harbors, with the greatest extent of inland navigation, with the richest supply of minerals, of any country in the world. The population was singularly daring, hardy, ingenious, and self-reliant, and untrammelled by feudal tradition. That opportunity has, under the protective system, been temporarily allowed to slip away. The old European path has been entered on, under the influence of the old European motives; the belief that gold is the only wealth; that, in trading with a foreigner, unless you sell him more in specie value than he sells you, you lose by the transaction; that diversity of industry being necessary to sound progress, diversity of individual tastes, bent, and capacity cannot be depended on to produce it; that manufactures being necessary to make the nation independent of foreigners in time of war, individual energy and sagacity cannot be trusted to create them.

The result is that we have, during the last quarter of a century, deliberately resorted to the policy of forcing capital into channels into which it did not naturally flow. We thus have supplied ourselves with manufactures on a large scale, but in doing so we have brought society in most of the large towns, in the East, at least, back to the old European model, divided largely into two classes, the one great capitalists, the other day-laborers, living from hand to mouth, and dependent for their bread and butter on the constant maintenance by the Government of artificial means of support. Agriculture has in this way been destroyed in some of the Eastern States, and, what is worse, so has commerce.

Had individuals in America been left to their own devices in the matter of building up manufactures, it is possible that the gross production of the country in many branches would have been less than it is now; but it is very certain that American society would have been in a healthier condition, and American industry would have been "taken out of politics," or, rather would never have got into it. An agricultural population, such as that of the Northern States sixty years ago, was sure not to confine itself to one field of industry exclusively. Enterprise and activity, love of work and love of trying all kinds of work, were as marked features of the national character then as they are now. The American population could boast of much greater superiority over the European population than it can now. There was sure, therefore, to have been a constant overflow from the farms of the most quick-witted, sharp-sighted, and enterprising men of the community, for the creation of new manufactures. They would have toiled, contrived, invented, copied, until they had brought into requisition and turned to account—as, in fact, they did to a considerable extent in colonial days—one by one, all the resources of the country, all its advantages over other countries in climate, soil, water-power, in minerals, or mental or moral force. Whatever manufactures were thus built up, too, would have been built up forever. They would have needed no hothouse legislation to save them. They would have flourished as naturally and could have been counted on with as much certainty as the wheat crop or the corn crop. Instead of being a constant source of uncertainty and anxiety and legislative corruption, they would have been one of the main-stays of our social and political system. American manufactures would then, in short, have been the legitimate outgrowth of American agriculture. They would have grown as it grew, in just and true relations to it. They would have absorbed steadily and comfortably its surplus population, and the American ideas of man's capacity, value, and needs would have reigned in the regulation of the new industry.

The present state of things is one which no thinking man can contemplate without concern. If the protectionist policy is persisted in, the process of assimilating American society to that of Europe must go on. The accumulation of capital in the hands of comparatively few individuals and corporations must continue and increase. Larger and larger masses of the population must every day be reduced to the condition of day-laborers, on fixed wages, contracting more and more the habit of looking on their vote simply as a mode of raising or lowering their wages, and, what is worse than all, learning to consider themselves a class apart, with rights and interests opposed to, or different from, those of the rest of the community.

What, then, is to be done by way of remedy? Nothing can be done suddenly; much can be done slowly. We must retrace our steps by degrees, by taking the duties off raw materials, so as to enable those manufactures which are nearly able to go alone to get out of the habit of dependence on legislation, and to go forth into all the markets of the world without fear and with a manly heart. We must deprive those manufactures which are able to go alone already, of the protection which they now receive, as the reward of log-rolling in Congress in aid of those still weaker than themselves. And we must finally, if it be possible, by a persistent progress in the direction of a truly natural state of things, prepare both laborers and employers for that real independence of foreigners, which is the result, simply and solely, of native superiority, either in energy or industry or inventiveness, or in natural advantages.

CRIMINAL POLITICS

The most serious question which faces the modern world to-day is the question of the government of great cities under universal suffrage. There is hardly any political or social puzzle the solution of which has not to be worked out in the streets of the great towns. The labor problem, for instance, is almost exclusively a city problem. It is in cities the great labor troubles occur. It is in them that population is growing most rapidly.

The following table shows the increase in the population in five great capitals during twenty years, ending in the year of the latest census:

London..............	1861. 2,803,989	....	1871. 3,254,260	....	1881. 3,814,571
Paris..	1861. 1,696,741	....	1872. 1,851,792	....	1881. 2,269,023
Berlin	1867. 702,437	1871. 826,329	1874. 949,144	....	1885. 1,315,287
Rome	1858. 180,359	....	1870. 215,000	1872. 244,484	1881. 300,467
New York...........	1860. 805,656	....	1870. 942,292	....	1880. 1,206,299

Far from being dependent for their increase in numbers, as the country districts are in the main, on the majority of births over deaths, they grow in size through immigration on a great scale. In all the leading countries there is a steady stream of men, women, and children into them. Men who have made their fortunes move into them as the places in which there are the most varied opportunities for such pleasures as wealth brings. Men who have their fortunes still to make crowd into them as the places in which there are the best markets and the best opening for every variety of talent.

But far more important than this is the fact that nearly all the poor, the improvident, the disgraced, the criminals, all the adventurers of both sexes, are consumed with the passion for city life. There is hardly any unsuccessful or unfortunate man in the United States, in England, France, Germany, or Italy, possessed of any mental activity or bodily strength, who does not think his condition would be bettered by getting to some great capital. The laborers are even more eager for the change than the other classes. A disgust with country life has spread, or is spreading, among workingmen in all these countries. Farmers in England and France complain that, in spite of the aid of machinery, farming is becoming increasingly difficult through want of hands. The new generation are unwilling to cultivate the earth any longer, or endure the solitude of farm life, if they can possibly avoid it.

The cities themselves do everything to stimulate this movement. Parks and gardens, cheap concerts, free museums and art galleries, cheap means of conveyance, model lodging-houses, rich charities, such as every city is now offering in abundance to all comers, are so many inducements to country poor to try their luck in the streets. They are the exact equivalents, as an invitation to the lazy and the pleasure-loving, of the Roman circus and free flour which we all use in explanation of the decline and fall of the Empire. They are luxuries which seem to be within every man's reach gratis, and they act with tremendous force on the rural imagination. Nor is there as yet the slightest sign of reaction. The great transmigrations of the world are, in the main, those of the farmers from one farm to another; but there is no sign among the poor of a return to the country of those who have once tasted the sweets of city life. That this aversion from the land among the masses should be contemporaneous with the rapid spread of Henry George's theory, that poverty is due to the difficulty men have in getting hold of ground to cultivate, is surely a very curious social phenomenon. Its success, however, has been mainly in the towns. He has had but few disciples among the agricultural population, and I suspect that even in the towns, if it were possible to analyze the grounds on which his followers have taken up his gospel, it would be found, in nine cases out of ten, that land, in their minds, simply stood for wealth in general, and that they thought of it as something that yielded ground-rent or house-rent, rather than as something that grew crops.

Though last, not least, the opportunities for concealment, for escaping observation, or, in other words, of securing solitude, which great masses of population afford, make the cities very attractive to criminals. They are the chosen homes of everybody inclined to, or actually living, a life of crime or a life bordering on crime. Gamblers, thieves, receivers of stolen goods, brothel-keepers, and the great army of those who shirk regular industry, all throng to the city as the place which affords the best opportunities for the exercise of their peculiar talents. The last-named class forms in every city a very large body of persons who, though not, strictly speaking, part of the criminal population, live on it or through it, and readily descend into its ranks.

This tendency is aggravated in this country by immigration, especially in the case of New York, which is the great receiving port for such additions to our population as come from Europe. In spite of frequent assertions to the contrary, and in spite of appearances to the contrary created by such excesses as those of the Anarchists in Chicago and elsewhere, the bulk of the European immigrants to this country are orderly, industrious people who have contributed much to its material prosperity, and have made, by the sums of money they bring with them, no less than by their labor, by no means insignificant additions to its capital. They have undoubtedly played a very large part in the opening up and reclamation of the regions beyond the Alleghanies known as the West. Without them the creation of the manufacturing industries which we are now so frantically trying to protect through the tariff, would have been impossible. So it will not do to throw on them all the responsibility of our political disorders and shortcomings. But nobody can deny that they have greatly increased the difficulty of the problem of city government under universal suffrage.

Every ship-load of immigrants which lands in New York contains a certain proportion of what may, for political purposes, be called sediment—that is, of persons with no fixed trade or calling or any kind of industrial training, who started with but little money beyond what was necessary to pay their passage at sea. To some of these New York is as far as they want to go; to most of them it is as far as they can go, and they at once recruit the legion of what the French call "*déclassés*"—that is, of social adventurers who are compelled to live either by manual labor or by their wits; and there is, of course, no one who has any wits who does not prefer the latter. That they furnish constant re-enforcements to the vicious and criminal elements of the population it is hardly necessary to say. More than this, they furnish the puzzle of philosophers and the despair of statesmen.

It is impossible to discuss this subject, as far as New York is concerned, without distinguishing between the influence on politics of the different nationalities which are represented in the voting population of the city. The two which play the leading part are the Germans and the Irish. At the last census their numbers were about equal. But there is a great difference in their political activity, partly owing to difference of temperament, partly to difference of training. The Germans are a slow, plodding, somewhat phlegmatic, and very serious people, who, as Dr. Von Holst, in a review of Mr. Bryce's book, truly says, in a feverish intensity of American activity, with their moderate and sober ideals, quiet and steady energy, and modest self-confidence, act as a wholesome leaven.

The Irish are quick, passionate, impetuous, impressionable, easily influenced, and with a hereditary disposition to personal loyalty to a leader of some sort. Their immigration is a more ignorant one than the German—indeed, I might say less civilized. They have for the most part but little, if any, industrial training, while the Germans have a great deal. There are probably ten Germans who come here with a trade of some sort, for one Irishman, and their trades are apt to be skilled ones which no man can successfully follow without having some sort of mental discipline and steadiness of character. The Germans, too, come with more or less affection for the government they have left behind, and pride in its success. The Irish come with hatred for their home government bred in their very bones. What is, perhaps, as serious a difference as any is that all classes of Germans, except the military aristocracy, are represented in the German immigration. It has always a mixture of educated men and successful business men who are on excellent terms with their humbler countrymen, and united to them by all the usual social and political ties. It is the misfortune of the Irish that their educated class and successful business class have to a great extent been separated from the bulk of the population at home by differences of race and religion, which continue under the new skies; and the religious differences occasionally treat Americans to the, to them, astonishing phenomena known as "Orange riots." Consequently, the bulk of the poor Irish who drop down into the New York streets as a deposit from each successive wave of immigration, find themselves without respectable natural leaders, and a ready prey to sharp-witted political adventurers. They are separated from Americans, too, not only by difference of habits, traditions, and ideals, but by difference of religion—perhaps the most formidable barrier of all. They have to contend against that dread of Catholicism which has now become among all classes of Anglo-Saxons, whether religious or sceptical, an integral part of their mental and moral make-up. And the Irish soon learn to regard the Americans, as they have learned through sorrowful experience to regard the well-to-do class in their own country, as in some sort lawful political prey, whom it is not improper to tax, if they get a chance, without mercy or compunction.

What makes this all the more formidable is that they have familiarity with political machinery, without having any political experience; that is, they know all about voting and agitating and canvassing, but they have never yet elected legislators who were responsible for the government under which they lived, whom they could fairly call to account if their affairs were mismanaged, or of whose misconduct they felt the direct effects. In other words, they have never had the only political training which develops public spirit or a sense of public morality—the strongest argument of all, to my mind, for Irish home rule. Irish parliamentary elections are, in fact, as a means of political training, complete shams. Nor have the Irish had any educating experience in the conduct of their local affairs. The consequence is that a large body of the Irish voters in our large cities enter on the game of politics in what may be called a predatory state of mind, without any sense of public duty, or of community of interest with the rest of the taxpayers. When we add to all this the fact that they are the only large body of immigrants who land in this country with a knowledge of the English language, and therefore can at once become acquainted with the ins and outs of the spoils system as practised by the natives, and with the whole system of "pulls" by which justice is denied or perverted, the public money converted into "boodle," and places won by the incompetent, the part they play in aggravating the puzzle of city government is not surprising. As voters simply, the Bohemians and Poles are just as manageable as they are. In what is called "the banner Republican district" in this city, the Eighth, in which the late Johnny O'Brien held sway, there are but few Irish. The bulk of the voters are Slavs of one denomination or another, and follow a leader with just such fidelity as the Irish, but they do not know enough to get hold of offices. They do not secure any of the prizes of corruption; and the reason is that they are ignorant of the language and unfamiliar with the machinery by which a share in the electoral plunder can be obtained.

Though last, not least, the temptation to immigrants who have no skilled trade and are averse to manual labor, and yet have a little more push and intelligence than the mass of their compatriots, to go into the liquor business in New York, owing to the ease with which licenses are obtained, is very strong, and the Irish fall victims to it in larger numbers than any other class of new-comers. But very little capital is required; in fact, hardly any, as credit for liquor is readily obtained from the distillers and brewers by pushing fellows, and the furniture and fixtures of a "rum-hole" involve but little outlay. With a barrel of cheap whiskey, which can be easily increased by adulteration, and a few kegs of beer on hand, an energetic new-comer in New York not only obtains at once the means of livelihood, but finds himself speedily a prominent social and political figure in his ward, whom men that he thinks highly placed consider it worth their while to flatter, or cajole, or encourage. The ease with which he can enter the liquor business,—an ease the like of which is not to be found in any other civilized city,—and his joy at finding that in a rum-shop he has made the first step in what seems to him a public career, naturally affect profoundly the imagination of hundreds of his countrymen, both here and at home, who know something about him and watch his progress, and form their estimate of American politics and morals from his example.

It was unfortunate that the change in the constitution of this State in 1846, establishing universal suffrage, occurred simultaneously with the beginning of the great tide of emigration which followed the Irish famine. Its result was that the city was soon flooded with a large body of ignorant voters, who at once furnished political speculators with a new field for their peculiar talents. Within six years they produced a kind of demagogue, previously unknown to the American public, in the person of Fernando Wood, who, by their aid, got into the mayoralty in 1854—the first of his kind who had ever done so, for he was to all intents and purposes an adventurer, with no standing in the business community. It was really he who organized New York city politics on what may be called a criminal basis; that is, he discovered the use which might be made in politics of the newly arrived foreigner, and the part which the liquor-dealers and all keepers of criminal or semi-criminal drinking-places might be made to play in maintaining party discipline and organization. In controlling a body of ignorant voters, who did not read, no agents could be so useful as the keepers of "resorts" in which men congregated in the evening, and at which they got credit for both food and drink.

Consequently the liquor-dealer, whether as a keeper of a bar, or of a "dive," or of a brothel, or of a cheap hotel, rapidly rose into the political prominence which he has ever since enjoyed. He became a captain of ten, or of fifty, or of a hundred, according to the size of his rum-shop and his own capacity for leadership. He rapidly took the place in politics which in the early part of the century was held by the foremen of the volunteer fire companies, as a centre of political influence and as the transmitter to the various wards of the will of the gods of the Tammany Society. Wood was succeeded as a boss by Tweed, and Tweed, of course, brought the Wood system to perfection. He gave the liquor-dealers increased political weight, and made his way to the hearts of the tenement-house population by lavish charities, such as the distribution of free coal in winter, which Wood had never thought of. His success may be estimated from the fact that he was re-elected to the State Senate by his constituents while the intelligent and well-to-do world above them was ringing with the exposure of his frauds and thefts.

How Tweed passed away everybody knows. He was the victim of his own excess. He might have stolen with perfect impunity for a long period, had he been more moderate. He was ruined by the scale on which he did his work. But his system remained, and in due time produced a successor in the person of John Kelly, who had profited by Tweed's example, practised the great Greek maxim "not too much of anything," simply made every candidate pay handsomely for his nomination, pocketed the money himself, and, whether he rendered any account of it or not, died in possession of a handsome fortune. His policy was the very safe one of making the city money go as far as possible among the workers, by compelling every office-holder to divide his salary and perquisites with a number of other persons. In this way no one person made the gains known under Tweed, but a far greater number were kept in a state of contentment, and the danger of exposures was thus averted or greatly lessened.

The more the Tammany organization had to rely on the liquor-dealers, the more certain and rapid was the transfer of its government to the hands of the criminal class. By criminal class I do not mean simply the class which commits highway robbery or burglary, or receives stolen goods, or keeps gambling-houses or houses of ill-fame. I mean not these only, but all who associate with them in political work, and who share political spoils with them; who help to shield them from judicial pursuit either by their influence with the district attorney or with the police justices, or with the police; in other words, both the actual perpetrators of crimes and those who are not repelled by them and are willing to profit in politics by their activity.

As I have said before, each of the numerous small sets, or "gangs," of which this world is made up has its "head-quarters" at some liquor store, or bar, or club, the keeper of which is its political guide and friend in times of trouble; and he is under a constant impulse to push the political fortunes of his clients and demand recognition for them so as to justify their reliance on him and respect for him. As long as Democratic victories in this city have to be won by his exertions, it is, of course, difficult or impossible to gainsay him. Men of all other trades and callings occasionally retire from "politics" altogether, for a long or short period. But the liquor-dealer never retires. He remains an agitator, organizer, and counsellor by virtue of his calling. His "place" is the centre of political gossip. He knows more of what is going on in the ward or district than anybody else—who hates whom; who is going to "get even" with whom; what Billy has been promised, or why he did not get it; from whom Jake borrowed his assessment, and how much he owes Barney, and what "deals" are in progress or have been contemplated. Consequently, every organization which counts on him tends more and more to pass into his hands and those of his customers.

This tendency has been strong in Tammany for many years. It has ended in excluding nearly all men of good character and respectable associations from its management. The public, which remembers that it used to have prominent lawyers and business men among its sachems and on its Executive Committee, is habitually startled at finding it in charge of liquor-dealers and "toughs." The remedy so often proposed, of taking away the charter which the Tammany Society obtained in its early and better days as a semi-charitable organization, is puerile on its face. The only use of the charter of the organization, as at present constituted, is to enable it to own real estate. But it does not need to own real estate in order to exist and flourish. It could get on just as well with a hired hall as with a hall in fee-simple. Its strength, I repeat, lies in the control it exerts over the ignorant, criminal, and vicious classes through its liquor-dealers, who never concern themselves in the least about the charter, and do not need to do so. It can exert all its present strength without any legal organization whatever, like any other political club. Its original construction and design and history are important in only one way.

No organization such as it now is could be started in our day; that is, the vicious and criminal class could not in any large city get up a club or association which would have the coherence, prestige, and authority that Tammany has. The attempt would be a failure from the outset, even if the organization did not succumb to the attacks of the police. No civilized community would witness with calm or indifference the deliberate formation of a combination which was plainly hostile to public prosperity and order, or the efficient administration of justice. Steps would soon be taken to break it up, or discredit it in some manner, so as to destroy its attractiveness to its supporters. Membership in it would bring such disrepute that men seeking any foothold in the respectable business or professional class would be unwilling to belong to it; politicians would be afraid to have it known that they relied on it, and it would rapidly go to pieces or be reduced to insignificance, even if it for a short period managed to show power.

The reason why the Tammany Society manages to stand its ground is that it is nearly a century old, and for fully half that time was a real political club, engaged in the maintenance and diffusion of certain political ideas which were, during all that period, making a considerable noise in the world, and effecting great governmental changes in many civilized countries. The leading men of the party which was the exponent of these ideas in this State, belonged to it, and a share in its management was one of the rewards of some kind of prominence in the world outside, either political or professional or commercial. Of course this gave it, in process of time, great political weight. Any organization which has managed to exist and flourish for half a century acquires great prestige in a society as changeful as ours, in which organizations of all sorts rise, flourish, and fade with so much rapidity, and in which even the most brilliant local reputations so soon pass out of men's memories. With the aureole thus acquired Tammany came down almost to 1850. Soon after that the vicious element began gradually to enter it and secure control of it, and drive politics, in the best sense of the term, out of it, but with so little outward sign of what was going on that the change, when suddenly revealed in Tweed's day, gave the public a shock of surprise.

Old New-Yorkers learned then that what had seemed to their youthful imagination a sort of temple of liberty, of which the worst that could be said was that it was too much given up to Southern worship of negro slavery, had really been taken possession of by a lot of tramps and converted into a "boozing ken." But they got over this shock somewhat after Tweed's day and the establishment of Tilden's supremacy in Democratic councils, and an air of respectability once more began to surround the ancient edifice. It did not, however, last for very long. The process of degeneration set in once more. The criminal classes renewed their activity, and they were in full possession before Tilden's death; but once more, and in spite of everything, the age of the edifice, the traditions which surrounded it, prevented the public from realizing what was passing within. It consequently almost astounded good people the other day to learn how few members of the Executive Committee could be said to have any really lawful occupation outside politics, or any genuine connection with the respectable business or social world.

Nothing is more surprising in the attempt to deal with the problems of urban life than the way in which religious and philanthropic people ignore the close connection between municipal politics and the various evils about which they are most concerned. All the churches occupy themselves, in a greater or less degree, with the moral condition of the poor. Charitable associations spend hundreds of thousands every year in trying to improve their physical condition. A conference of Protestant ministers met in this city two years ago to consider the best means of reviving religious interest among the working classes and inducing a larger number of them to attend church on Sundays. Of course these gentlemen did not seek an increase in the number of church-goers as an end in itself. The Protestant churches do not, as the Catholic Church does, ascribe any serious spiritual efficacy to mere bodily presence at religious worship. Protestant ministers ask people to go to church in the hope that the words which they will hear " with their outward ears may be so grafted inwardly in their hearts that they may bring forth the fruit of good living." What was remarkable in the debates of this conference, therefore, was the absence of any mention of the very successful rivalry with the religion which, as an influence on the poor and ignorant foreign population, politics in this city carries on. The same thing may be said, *mutatis mutandis*, of the charitable associations. No one would get from their speeches or reports an inkling of the solemn fact that the newly arrived immigrant who settles in New York gets tenfold more of his notions of American right and wrong from city politics than he gets from the city missionaries, or the schools, or the mission chapels; and yet such is the case. I believe it is quite within the truth to say that, as a moral influence on the poor and ignorant, the clergyman and philanthropist are hopelessly distanced by the politician.

It must be remembered that the poor immigrant who drops down in New York generally comes from a country in which the idea that the public functionaries are the servants of the people, or the product of popular selection, has not as yet penetrated the popular mind. He is apt to hold on still, in a blind, unreflective way, to the old doctrine that the powers that be are of God, and that what a man in authority says or does is, in some sense, the expression of the national morality. He has not as yet learned to criticise public officers or call them to account. He obeys them; he seeks to ingratiate himself with them. He accepts their decisions, if unfavorable, as misfortunes; if favorable, as blessings. He does not dream of appealing against them to public opinion, for he does not know what public opinion is. No sooner has he established himself in a tenement-house or a boarding-house than he finds himself face to face with three functionaries who represent to him the government of his new country—the police justice of the district, the police captain of his precinct, and the political "district leader." These are, to him, the Federal, State, and municipal governments rolled into one. He does not read Story or Bryce. He knows nothing about the limitation of powers, or the division of spheres, or constitutional guarantees.

What he learns very soon is that, if he makes himself obnoxious to the captain of the precinct, he may be visited with so much vexation as to drive him out of the ward; that if he would avoid the severities of the police justice whenever he has a little scrimmage with one of his neighbors, or gets into "trouble" of any description, he must have a mediator or protector, and this mediator or protector must be "the district leader" or a politician belonging to one party or the other. He then perceives very soon that, as far as he is concerned, ours is not a government of laws, but a government of "pulls." When he goes into the only court of justice of which he has any knowledge, he is told he must have a "pull" with the magistrate or he will fare badly. When he opens a liquor-store, he is told he must have a "pull" with the police in order not to be "raided" or arrested for violation of a mysterious something which he hears called "law." He learns from those of his countrymen who have been here longer than he that, in order to come into possession of this "pull," he must secure the friendship of the district leader. These three men are to him America. Everything else in the national institutions in which Americans pride themselves, he only sees through a glass darkly, if he sees it at all.

If he is a man of parts and energy, or rises above the condition of a manual laborer into that of a liquor-dealer or small contractor, he finds himself impeded or helped at every step by "pulls." If he wants a small place in the public service, he must have a "pull." If he wants a government contract, he must have a "pull." Whether he wants to get his just rights under it, or to escape punishment for fraud or bad work in the execution of it, he must have a "pull." In the ward in which he lives he never comes across any sign of moral right or moral wrong, human or divine justice. All that he learns of the ways of Providence in the government of the city is that the man with the most "pulls" gets what he wants, and that the man with no "pulls" goes to the wall. Every experience of the municipality satisfies him that he is living in a world of favor and not of law. He hears that large sums of money are voted every year for the cleaning of the streets, but he sees that they are not cleaned. He hears that it is forbidden to throw out dirt and ashes into the highway, but he sees that all his neighbors do it with impunity. He hears that gambling-houses and houses of prostitution are forbidden, but he sees them doing a roaring trade all around him. He hears that it is a crime to keep a liquor-saloon open on Sunday, but he finds the one he frequents is as accessible on Sunday as on any other day. He hears that licenses to sell liquor should be granted only to persons of good character, but he sees that the greatest scoundrels in his neighborhood get them and keep them as readily as anyone else. He has come over the sea with the notion that magistrates should be grave and discreet persons, learned in the law, but he sees seated on the bench in his own district his own friend, Billy McGrath, who plays poker every night with him and "the boys" in Mike Grogan's saloon, and in court always gives his cronies "a show." Nowhere does he come on any standard of propriety or fitness in the transaction of public business, or on any recognition of such things as duty or honor in dealing with the public interests.

Now, what chance have the city missionaries and philanthropists of making themselves felt in an atmosphere of this sort? They might as well go to the African heathen, and try to make Christians by dividing their preaching time with the medicine-men, as to try to make an impression on the poor of this city as long as the administration of its affairs is a standing denial of God. What helpless visionaries they must seem to thousands as they wander about the liquor-saloons with their Bibles, and tell their tales of what good Americans think about life and death and judgment, and about the prosperity which waits on the honest man and good citizen. The truth is that anyone who occupies himself with the moral and religious elevation of the poor in this city can no more disregard politics than a doctor, in treating physical disease, can refuse to take notice of bad drains or decaying garbage. He must not only take politics into account in his work, but must take it into account at the very beginning.

What is to be done by reformers generally to introduce a new and better régime into city affairs, it is not easy to describe fully within the limits of an article like this. There are certain things, however, which have been fully tried and have so plainly failed that no more mention should be made of them. One is the denunciation of universal suffrage. There is no doubt that universal suffrage has added to the difficulties of city government, and has lowered the standard of official purity and fitness; but, to use the slang phrase, it has so plainly "come to stay," and is so firmly lodged in the political arrangements of most civilised nations, that it is a mere waste of time to declaim against it. Complaining of it as an obstacle to good government is like complaining of a stormy sea as a reason for giving up navigation.

Another is reliance on the State Legislature for new charters, or for the expulsion of bad men from office by special legislation. This mode of reform was begun in 1857, when the Republican party got possession of the State government, and it has ended in converting the interests of the city into gambling-stakes for Albany politicians to play with. They oust each other from city offices with no more reference to the interests of city taxpayers than butchers on killing-day to the feelings of the oxen. There have been eleven charters enacted since 1846, and we have now got the best of them all, and the best we are in the least likely to get. It is the simplest, and puts more direct power into the hands of the city voters than they have ever had before. Its excellence lies in the fact that it concentrates in the mayor responsibility for appointments to all the leading offices except the comptrollership, and puts the control of taxation in the hands of a small body of conspicuous men elected on a general ticket. We cannot do better than this. It makes every election a direct appeal to the good sense and public spirit of the voter. No community as heterogeneous as ours can manage its affairs successfully through democratic forms without reducing to its lowest possible point the number of executive officers whom it has to watch, and call to account when things go wrong. As soon as responsibility is widely diffused in such a community, "deals" or bargains between politicians for the division of the offices at once begin.

For we have among our other difficulties to deal with the fact—in some of its aspects a tremendous one—that the fifty years of the spoils system have almost destroyed in the popular mind the tradition of trusteeship in connection with public offices. Among active politicians they are now almost universally looked upon, as in France under the old régime, as franchises or privileges authorizing the holder to levy a certain amount of toll on the State for a certain limited period. Until this view has been eradicated, it is reasonable to fear that a large municipal legislature or council, which some are thinking of, would simply be a reproduction on a smaller scale of the Albany Legislature, with whose weaknesses and defects the public by this time is tolerably familiar. It is safe to say that, as things are to-day, we cannot better ourselves by any changes in the framework of the city government which there is the least chance of obtaining from the law-making power, except in one particular, and that is the exaction of higher qualifications for the office of police justice. The police magistrates are, after the mayor, perhaps the most important city officers. They have a more direct relation to municipal health and morals than any other. They ought to be lawyers, of at least seven years' standing at the bar, and men of established character and repute. At present there is no standard of fitness for the office whatever. Any man who can get it through "pulls" is held to be competent to fill it, and it is, as a matter of fact, disposed of as a piece of party spoil to active local politicians. So that it may be said that, with this exception, we have had since 1885, when the absolute power of appointment was put into the mayor's hands, as good a scheme of local government as we have ever had, or are likely to have within any period worth thinking about for practical purposes.

Have we, then, exhausted our resources? Is the rule of the criminal classes under which we are living at this moment destined to be permanent? Who or what is to blame for it? Can it not be shaken off, or can its recurrence not be prevented?

The answer to these questions is comparatively easy. There is nothing unnatural or abnormal in our condition. It is the plain and natural effect of causes of the simplest and most obvious kind. In fact, it would be very odd if we were any better off than we are, considering the way in which we manage our municipal business. The objects of a municipal corporation are nearly as definable as those of a railroad company. They consist simply in supplying the inhabitants of a certain locality with certain conditions of physical health and comfort, plus the education of their children. The work is paid for by an annual subscription, and the executive officers are elected by a general vote.

If there be in this world a plain moral obligation, it is the obligation which rests on every inhabitant to use his vote in electing these officers solely in the common interest of himself and his neighbors. To use it in his own individual interest, or in the interest of some other corporation or body of persons not dwelling in the locality or owning property in it, is of exactly the same moral quality as the transaction called "wrecking a railroad," in which the directors of a railroad corporation ruin it either for their own personal gain or in order to contribute to the prosperity of some other railroad.

In other words, it is a breach of trust. The more poor, or ignorant, or helpless the neighbors of an inhabitant of a municipal corporation are, the more solemn is the obligation which rests on him to use his superior intelligence for their benefit. He has no right to let them be swindled by clever sharpers if he can prevent it, simply because they are easily duped. He has no right to say that, as he can take care of himself in any event, he is not going to trouble himself about the plight of those who have neither knowledge enough nor money enough to protect themselves against fraud. He has no right to shut his eyes to dirty streets elsewhere because he can afford to keep his own street clean by private contract, and has a country house where he spends half the year. He has no right to surrender the poor to corrupt or ignorant judges, because he can pay for the best police the country affords. In short, he has no right to live an absolutely selfish life in the city any more than in the country at large. Patriotism has its municipal obligations as well as national obligations, and, in fact, makes duty to the municipality far clearer to the plain man than duty to the nation.

If this be all true,—and I do not think it will meet with denial from any respectable source,—we shall have little difficulty in showing that the responsibility for our local misgovernment by no means rests on "the ignorant foreigners": on the contrary, it rests very distinctly on the intelligent and well-to-do natives. They have three times since 1884 deliberately gone through the process known in railroading as "wrecking"—that is, have tried to use the municipal administration to promote schemes in which the city, as a city, has no special interest whatever. If the minority of the stockholders of a bank were to endeavor to put into office a certain board of directors, in order that they might make heavy loans to political committees, or merely in order to show their own strength, they would soon stand in the public eye in the same moral, if not legal, position as the men who wrecked the Sixth National Bank. And yet it is difficult, from the moral point of view, to distinguish between such conduct as this and the conduct of the Republicans who at every mayoralty election, when they know they cannot succeed, persist in running a third candidate in order to exert influence on the Presidential election or on congressional legislation.

New York is, has been, and probably will remain for an indefinite period, a Democratic city. In so far as "Democratic" means the votes of the more ignorant of the population, of course this is to be regretted. I regret it as much as anybody. But it is a fact, and has to be dealt with as a fact. And there is another fact of the situation still more important than this—a fact which I think may be called unique as a political phenomenon; namely, that the ignorance and vice of the city have been organized in an association mainly for the purpose of plundering the municipal treasury and quartering a large body of shiftless people on the public service. But, fortunately for the city, this association does not contain a majority of the municipal voters, though it does contain a majority of Democratic voters.

But the minority of Democrats who are hostile to it and to its works and ways, and are willing to act against it, is considerable—considerable enough to put the association in a minority at city elections. These dissentient Democrats cannot be got to accept Republican nominations, no matter how good they are: this, too, is very regrettable. It would not be true if all Democrats were as intelligent and public-spirited as we should wish to see them. But it is a fact, and has to be dealt with as a fact. It has, therefore, to be taken into account by intelligent and honorable men, in providing the city with an administration, just as much as the liability of city houses to take fire. Municipal politics, like all other politics, is a practical art. It deals with men as they are, and not as we wish them to be. There is hardly one of us who, if he had the power of peopling New York anew, would not make an immense number of changes among its present inhabitants. But the problem before the wise and good is simply how to give the present inhabitants, such as they are, with all their imperfections on their heads, the best attainable government. The lesson of experience on this point is that we should vote for the best candidate whom either Democratic faction puts up, and try to extract a good nomination from it by the promise or offer of this support. In nine cases out of ten this would give us as good a city government as we are, in the present condition of human nature, entitled to.

It would have given Mayors Grace and Hewitt overwhelming majorities in 1884 and 1888. They were elected, it is true, in its absence, and they began a process of filling city offices which, but for the Republican mistake in running a candidate in aid of General Harrison in 1888, would, in spite of some haltings, have gradually revolutionized the municipal service and established sound and probably permanent administrative traditions. As it was, this process put first-rate men at the head of the Board of Public Works and of the Health Board. It partially rescued the Excise Board from the liquor-dealers and considerably improved the Park Board; and had the large number of vacancies which have fallen into the hands of Tammany during the term of Mayor Grant been placed at the disposal of Mayor Hewitt, or of a man like him, we should have entered on the year 1891 with brighter municipal prospects than New York has known for fifty years.

But there can be no hope of permanent improvement in municipal business, any more than in any other business, until city elections are conducted for the sake of the city. Any business which is administered in the interest of some other business soon ends in bankruptcy. A dry-goods business managed with a view not to the sale of the dry goods, but the establishment of a newspaper, would not last very long. New York is too rich to be brought to insolvency. Great cities, when badly administered, cannot be sold and abolished; they simply become dirty, unhealthy, unsafe, disgraceful, and expensive. It is high time that this great municipal shame disappeared from among us, and deliverance ought not to be difficult, for we believe there is not a city in the Union in which the honest, well-meaning, orderly, and industrious voters are not in a large majority.

"THE ECONOMIC MAN"

We have been hearing during the past twenty years, and with greatly increased emphasis during the past ten, of the utter discredit which has overtaken the older political economy of Adam Smith, and Ricardo, and Mill, and Cairnes, and Say, and Cobden, and Bastiat. Their system, we have been told, is largely a deductive system, in which the premises are furnished by hypotheses which have no basis in the actual facts of industrial life, and are not verified either by experiment or observation. Not only are these premises not true of the world at large, but they are not true of any particular country in the world. They assume that the civilized world lives under the régime of competition, whereas there are only two or three countries which can be said, with any approach to accuracy, to do so. The "Economic Man" of Ricardo always buys in the cheapest markets, and always waits patiently until he can sell in the dearest, and he assumes that in so doing he renders the best service in his power to the community.

Moral considerations do not, in any degree, affect his business transactions. There is no place in his system for brotherly kindness or charity. It is inexpedient for the state to attempt to regulate him in any way, either by keeping him out of the cheapest market or impeding his access to the dearest. All he asks of it is to be left alone to deal with his fellow-men in such manner as his own natural acuteness or his command of capital may permit. His one desire is to make all the money he can by every means not illegal. *Laissez faire, laissez passer*, comprises the sole and whole duty of the state toward him.

Ricardo, who is the scapegoat who has to bear the burden of most of the sins of the old school, or who, at all events, figures most prominently in this discussion, has, it is said, built up his political economy on the desires and fears of an entirely mythical personage. For his "Economic Man" is not a real man. This man does not represent the human race in general or any particular part of it. He is a creature of the economist's imagination. The facts of human life have not entered into his composition. The old political economy—the "Smithianismus," as the Germans call it—has been based on the assumption that this economic man exists. It must be discarded when it is shown that he does not exist; that his assumed motives and activities are not the law of industrial communities. A new inductive political economy must, therefore, take the place of this old deductive one, and must be based on the observation and careful accumulation of the facts of industrial life in civilized countries, either as they now exist or as they are historically recorded. As the economic history of every country differs in some degree from that of every other country, it follows that every country must have its own political economy and its own staff of expounders of the local science.

This is, accordingly, what has happened. There have arisen a German school, an Austrian school, an English school, a Russian school, and an American school, which all differ in the matter of "method," but all agree in repudiating Adam Smith and his economic followers, in denouncing *laissez faire, laissez passer*, as an economic rule, in being intensely "historical," and in endeavoring to supply morality to trade through some sort of government interference, not as yet clearly defined. The scorn of the new schools for Smith and Mill and Ricardo is indeed almost bitter, but their differences about "method"—that is, about the exact nature of the mental processes by which they reach their conclusions—are already nearly as numerous as those of the metaphysicians, and are apparently likely to prove as barren. If Comte, who first flouted the pretensions of political economy to be considered a science, were now living, these differences would please him hugely as illustrations of the soundness of his position. A little volume on "The Scope and Method of Political Economy," recently published by Mr. Keynes, the Lecturer on Moral Science in Cambridge University (England), should be read by any one who wishes to get an adequate idea not so much of economical methodology as of the methodological confusion which reigns among the economists. He remarks truly:

> "Economic science deals with phenomena which are more complex and less uniform than those with which the natural sciences are concerned; and its conclusions, except in their most abstract form, lack both the certainty and precision that pertain to physical laws. There is a corresponding difficulty in regard to the proper method of economic study, and the problem of defining the conditions and limits of the validity of economic reasoning becomes one of exceptional complexity. It is, moreover, impossible to establish the right of any one method to hold the field to the exclusion of others. Different methods are appropriate according to the materials available, the stage of investigation reached, and the object in view; hence arises the special task of assigning to each its legitimate place and relative importance." (P. 6.)

Still more pertinent is the following:

> "The sharp distinctions drawn by opposing schools, and their narrow dogmatism, have unnecessarily complicated

the whole problem. The subject has become involved in heated controversies that have not only made it wearisome to unprejudiced persons, but have also done injury to the credit of political economy itself. Outsiders are naturally suspicious of a science in the treatment of which a new departure is so often and so loudly proclaimed essential." (P. 8.)

This contempt for the "Economic Man" is the more remarkable because the members of the historic school themselves perforce make use of him. Roscher, who may be called the chief of it, relies on him fully as much as Ricardo. Such phrases as these abound in him:

"The systematic effort of *every* rational individual in his household management is directed towards the obtaining by a minimum of sacrifice of pleasure and energy a maximum satisfaction of his wants." (Vol. I, pp. 60–66.) "The incentive to ameliorate one's condition is common to *all* men, no matter how varied the form, or how different the intensity of its imagination. It follows us *all* from the cradle to the grave. It may be restricted within certain limits, but is never *entirely* extinguished." *All* normal economy aims at securing a maximum of personal advantage with a minimum of cost or outlay." (P. 73.) "Self-interest causes *every one* to choose the course in life in which he shall meet with least competition and the most abundant patronage." (P. 75.) "The abstraction according to which *all* men are by nature the same, different only in consequence of a difference of education, position in life, etc., *all* equally well equipped, skilful, and free in the matter of economic production and consumption, is one which, as Ricardo and Von Thunen have shown, must pass as an *indispensable stage* in the preparatory labors of political economists." (P. 105.) "The mathematical laws of motion operate in a hypothetical vacuum, and when applied are subject to important modifications in consequence of atmospheric resistances. Something similar is true of most of the laws of our science; as, for instance, those in accordance with which the price of a commodity is fixed by the buyer and seller. It also *always* supposes the parties to the contract to be guided *only* by a sense of their own best interest, and not to be influenced by secondary considerations." (P. 103.)*

The comparison of Ricardo's Economic Man to the first law of motion is an old one, but it is as good to-day as when it was first made. It is quite true, as far as human knowledge goes, that no body actually continues for an indefinite period in rectilinear and uniform motion. But it is also true that no real progress would ever have been made in astronomy or mechanics without the assumption that if a body were set in motion in a vacuum this is the way in which it would move. It is no less true that political economy, no matter how defined, cannot be taught without assuming the existence of an Economic Man who desires above all things, and without reference to ethical considerations, to get as much of the world's goods as he can with the least possible expenditure of effort or energy on his own part. The fact that he is not humane or God-fearing no more affects his usefulness for scientific purposes than the fact that the first law of motion would carry a cannon-ball through a poor man's cottage. The theory of production, of value, and of exchange, rests on his assumed existence. He supplies the *raison d'être* of the whole criminal law and of a large part of the civil law of all civilised countries. Ethics, and religion in so far as it furnishes a sanction for ethics, exist for the purpose of deflecting him from his normal course. The well-known "Gresham's Law," which declares that the less valuable of two kinds of legal-tender money will drive the more valuable out of circulation, has been understood by some of our more ignorant bimetallists as meaning that one will exert some kind of mechanical pressure or chemical repulsion on the other. But "Gresham's Law" is simply a deduction from observation of the working of the Economic Man's mind when brought into contact with two kinds of currency of unequal value, and through our knowledge of the Economic Man we can predict its operation with almost as much certainty as the operation of a law of chemistry or physics.

---

* These quotations are all made from Lalor's translation.

Ethics and religion, in fact, constitute the disturbing forces which make possible the organization and prosperous existence of civilized states. They have to be calculated and allowed for and their working observed, just as the disturbing force of gravity, or atmospheric or other resistance, has to be calculated, allowed for, and its working observed, in astronomy or mechanics. But this calculation would be impossible if the constant tendency were not known. If the Economic Man were blotted out of existence, nearly all the discussions of the economists would be as empty logomachy as the attempts to reconcile fixed fate and free will. That I am not here fighting a shadow is shown by the fact that General Francis A. Walker, himself an economist of eminence, in a recent address before the American Economic Association, on "The Tide of Economic Thought," gives the following as one of the reasons for the currency at this juncture of "the vaguest and wildest schemes for human regeneration upon an economic basis":

> "First. The economists themselves are largely responsible for this state of things, on account of the arbitrary and unreal character of their assumptions and the haughty and contemptuous spirit in which they have too often chosen to deliver their precepts. Especially are our American economists sinners above the rest in these respects. Long after even the English economists, who have been lordly enough, Heaven knows! had *importantly modified the traditional premises of the science to meet the facts of human*

nature, and had, with a wider outlook, admitted many extensive qualifications of the doctrine of *laissez faire*, the professors of political economy in the leading American colleges continued to write about the economic man of Ricardo and James Mill as if he was worth all the real men who ever lived; and the editors of the journals and reviews which especially affected to exercise authority in economics, greeted with contumely every suggestion of an exception to the rule of individualism, from whatever source proceeding, for whatever reason proposed. Even the complete establishment of such an exception in the policy of half a dozen nations, and its triumphant vindication in practical working to the satisfaction of all publicists, all men of affairs, and even of those who had once been selfishly interested to oppose it, constituted no reason why these high priests of economic orthodoxy should accept it."

I might, if I had space, take serious exception to these allegations about the teachings of professors in American colleges, on the score of exaggeration, and also to the proposition touching the satisfaction of "*all* publicists and *all* men of affairs," on the score of accuracy. But I am not concerned about this so much as about the statement that the English and other economists have "importantly modified the traditional premises of the science." I am sure that were General Walker debating any topic but political economy, in discussing which no man ever gets fully outside of his subject, he would at once recognize the fact that the premises of "a science" cannot be altered to suit any one's fancy or convenience. Science means the law which regulates the succession of phenomena. Scientific investigation means an attempt by observation or experiment, or both, to get at this law. But it is only in theology or metaphysics that the scientific investigator creates his own premises, and makes hypotheses which account for nothing. In all other fields, political economy included—if it be a science—the premises are not furnished by the logician, but by the phenomena of nature. Human society furnishes the economist with his phenomena, and therefore with his premises. He can, if he be a scientific man, no more modify them "importantly" or otherwise than he can by taking thought add a cubit to his stature. He can, of course, as in any line of investigation, frame hypotheses, but the hypotheses have to be verifiable by observation or experiment. But under all circumstances, and for all purposes, there is no getting away from the phenomena. You may dislike them, or wish they were otherwise, but accept them you must. You may approach them inductively by collecting them for your premises, or you may approach them deductively by concocting a hypothesis or theory to explain them, but you must still apply them promptly to your conclusion to see whether they fit. I venture to assert that there is not a single economist of the old school, beginning with Adam Smith, who, as a scientific man, has not used both these methods with such success as his diligence and skill permitted. But in all economic investigation the first inquiry is, and, so far as it is economical, must forever remain: what will the Economic Man do when brought in contact with certain selected phenomena of the physical or social world? And the more complicated the facts of the industrial and social world are, the more necessary to the economist the Economic Man is, in order to enable him to steer his way through the maze.

The existing confusion in the economic world, which General Walker's charge, quoted above, well illustrates, is due, apparently, to difficulty in getting the members of the new or historical schools to tell us in what character they appear. One can never tell, in listening to them, whether they are addressing us as scientific men or statesmen. Their air of authority is that of scientists, but the eager philanthropy of their utterances indicates that they are really would-be legislators. Their clothes are economical, but their talk is ethical. To take Roscher again as an example of the best-known and most moderate of them, one finds that what he has added to the work of the older economists, besides the illustrations supplied by an enormous erudition, consists mainly of theology and metaphysics. The new schools profess to know far more about the will of God, and about duty and the moral sources of happiness, and the ethical foundations of the state, than the older economists; but they have not contributed anything of practical importance to our knowledge of the laws of value, of production, or of exchange, as extracted from the mind of the producer and purchaser. The test of science is that it enables one to predict consequences. Until our researches have enabled us to foresee exactly what will happen if something else happens, although we may have discovered valuable and interesting facts, we have not discovered a law. That the historical school has laid before us a large mass of interesting information about the industrial condition of various countries at various periods cannot be denied, but I am unable to see in what its contributions to economical literature differ from the books of intelligent and observant travellers. Its great objection to the policy of *laissez faire*—that it permits a considerable amount of cruelty, oppression, and suffering, and that, in spite of its teachings, poverty exists on a great scale among the laboring classes—is an ethical or political, not a scientific, objection. It is simply saying to the rich what the "Society for the Abolition of Poverty" says—that they are cruel or unjust. It does not suggest any economical mode, in the scientific sense of the term, for improving the condition of the poor.

Take as an example of my meaning General Walker's announcement, in the passage I have just quoted, of "the complete establishment" of "an exception to the rule of individualism" (I presume the regulation of factory labor) "in the policy of half a dozen nations" "to the satisfaction of all publicists, all men of affairs," etc. This exception, let us observe, was first made in the country which has been supposed to be most influenced by the individualists. But no matter what its merits, or what its results, the fact remains that it is not an exception in the economic sense. It is a political or social measure, not an economic one. It is not a conclusion of economic science. It is a dictate of humanity or physiology or religion. It is a police regulation, to which the Economic Man is no more opposed than to the restrictions on the use of public water or the municipal prohibition of the storing of gunpowder. It was opposed in the beginning not by economists, but by manufacturers who happened to be at the time strongly combating the kind of government interference with production which had been the rule in Europe ever since the Middle Ages. There is no foundation for the suggestion that in any "half dozen" countries in the world the Economic Man has offered any serious impediment to the kind of special interference with distribution for the benefit of the race which is known as socialistic legislation. The legislation has, as a matter of fact, begun earliest in England, where individualism has been supposed to be most powerful, and has gone on, *pari passu*, with the spread of the opinions associated with the names of Smith and Ricardo and Cobden. The only effect of these opinions on English legislation has been to abolish the former hindrances to exchange with foreign countries; and those who advocated this have certainly not been brought to shame by the resulting effect on the national industry and on the condition of the working classes.

In short, the new school of economists are rather politicians, using the word in its good sense, than scientific men. What mainly occupies them is legislation for taking away money from capitalists and distributing it among laborers. The earlier school may have paid too much attention to the problem of production. The later ones can hardly be said to pay any attention at all to production. With the effect of their plans on production—that is, on the dividend which the earth yields every year to the labor of its inhabitants—they hardly seem to concern themselves.

To talk of their championship of the working classes as being in any sense scientific would be an abuse of language.

I cannot help thinking that General Walker's ascription of the existing currency "of the vaguest and wildest schemes for human regeneration on an economic basis" to the economists —meaning by that the followers of Ricardo and Mill — is a curious misapprehension. It reads very like the criticism of the wolf on the lamb's pollution of the water. If dates throw any light on the matter, "the wild and vague schemes for human regeneration upon an economic basis" did not begin to spread or take hold of any civilized community with marked force or effect until after the convention of the "Katheder Socialisten" in Germany in 1877, and the appearance of the historical school in Germany, England, and America. Professor Ingram's attack on political economy in general in the "Encyclopædia Britannica" undoubtedly gave somewhat of a blow to "Smithianismus," but he only repeated what Comte had already said of the absurdity of supposing that there could be any such thing as economical science apart from the general science of sociology. He, however, greatly diminished the apparent value of the Economic Man and helped to start crowds of young professors and labor agitators and politicians in search of a new economy which would shorten hours of labor, raise wages, humble the employer, give the laborer a fair share in the luxuries of life, and eventually abolish poverty.

The progress of this *quasi* scientific movement toward social regeneration through government interference, of the discredit of the older economists, and of the resulting economic confusion of which General Walker speaks, has been hastened by two other agencies of which he takes no notice. The charge that this confusion has been brought about through the bad manners of the old economists, and the hard-and-fast way in which they presented their theories to the multitude, shows that it is not science but politics which has been expected of them. The fact—if it be a fact—that the multitude refuses to listen to them any longer, and has gone off to worship new gods, does not prove that they have reasoned wrongly on the facts of society. It simply proves that their conclusions are unpopular. That a certain number of persons have gone into "the vaguest and wildest schemes for human regeneration on an economic basis" does not show that the assumptions of the old economists have been "arbitrary and unreal," although it may show that their precepts have been delivered in a "haughty and contemptuous spirit." But judging these economists as legislators, which is really what the new school does, it is impossible to decide, on any data now in our possession, whether the *laissez-faire* system, as it is called, has been, or will be, successful or not.

There is, unhappily, no absolute test of success in economic legislation. All that the wisest legislator can look for as a sign of his success in dealing with economic problems is a reduction in the amount of discontent among the poor. To abolish discontent among the poor completely, in any country, is as hopeless a task as to abolish poverty, and no statesman attempts it. Whether he has succeeded in lessening discontent he can only ascertain approximately, by means of an inference from the increase of consumption as shown in statistics collected from various sources. He concludes, *à priori*, that the poor are less discontented when they consume more of the necessaries and luxuries, because he has observed that, as a rule, physical comfort among the great bulk of mankind tends to produce happiness; but no economist can say with certainty that any particular kind of economical legislation is the best possible, or has produced effects which no other kind would or will produce. It is here that the complexity of all sociological problems comes in to baffle the politician, and compels him, in the vast majority of cases, to legislate simply for the Economic Man, with whose needs and tendencies he is, as a rule, far more familiar than he is with the needs of the ethical man. So that if the new schools of political economy enter the field, as they are apparently doing, not as scientists, but as legislators, their attacks on the old one as politicians cannot have any better basis than pride of opinion. It remains to be seen whether their plans for the promotion of human happiness are in any way superior to those of the old school or not.

It seems to be forgotten that the paternal system of government, in which what is called "the state" plays the part of an earthly parent to the individual, has been tried on an extensive scale in various communities and at various periods of the world's history, and with very poor success. I grant that it has not been tried under conditions as favorable as those which now exist. The experiment may now be made with greatly improved administrative machinery, with minute as well as wide knowledge of economic facts and tendencies, and under the watch of a powerful public opinion. But, on the other hand, the state has lost completely, in the eyes of the multitude, the moral and intellectual authority it once possessed. It does not any longer represent God on earth. In democratic countries it represents the party which secured most votes at the last election, and is, in many cases, administered by men whom no one would make guardians of his children or trustees of his property. When I read the accounts given by the young lions of the historical school of the glorious future which awaits us as soon as we get the proper amount of state interference with our private concerns for the benefit of the masses, and remember that in New York "the state" consists of the Albany Legislature under the guidance of Governor Hill, and in New York city of the little Tammany junta known as "the Big Four," I confess I am lost in amazement. I ask myself, How can anybody who attacks the old school with such vigor for its indifference to the facts of daily life, be so completely oblivious of that most patent fact, that the capacity of the state for interfering with people profitably, has not grown in anything like the same ratio as the popular intelligence, and that there is nothing in which modern democracy is showing itself so deficient as in the provision of inspecting machinery—that is, in securing the faithful execution of its plans for the promotion of popular comfort?

The agencies which have really done most to discredit the older political economy with the masses, and to produce an efflorescence of wild schemes of social regeneration on an economic basis, are, as I have said, two in number. The first is the extravagant expectations about the powers of the state in the solution of economical problems raised by the historical school since its appearance in 1877. Its promises and denunciations have been flung into democratic communities in which, as in France, Germany, and England, the poorer classes were just becoming aware of the extent of the power over the government which universal suffrage had put into their hands. In no country have "the masses," in the modern sense of that term, ever been greatly concerned about political liberty, as the men of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in this country and England understood it and fought for it; that is, about the division of the sovereignty between different bodies so as to prevent the growth of arbitrary power. The greatest political interest of that vast majority of the human race which is in but a small degree removed from want, always has been, and probably always will be, the power of legislation over distribution. A good government always has been to them a government under which trade is brisk, wages are high, and food is cheap. The reason why the older political economy has seemed to them "a dismal science" has been that its teachings, in so far as it attempted to teach, discouraged reliance on the state for these things, and made the attainment of them dependent on individual character. I am not now discussing whether this doctrine was or was not pushed too far; I simply say that it was the most natural thing in the world for the working classes of England, for example, which had been so long familiar with legislation for the direct benefit of the middle and upper classes, to receive with anger or suspicion the announcement that the care of any class by the state was a mistake, and that individual independence was the true rule of industrial life. When these classes, therefore, found themselves invested through the suffrage with political power, it was inevitable that they should seek at once to improve their condition through legislation, and should receive with acclamation the news that a new school of political economy had been founded which taught as "science" that the politicians were the true fathers of their country, and would, on application, put an end to unjust distribution. In short, the new departure which the new schools are all calling for is a new departure in politics, not in political economy. There is hardly a trace of science in their talk any more than in that of city missionaries. What they are asking us to do is simply to try a hazardous experiment in popular government.

The second agency in producing the existing economic confusion, which, as it appears to me, General Walker overlooks, is the substitution in nearly all the churches of the "gospel of social endeavor," as it has been called, for the old theological gospel. There are very few clergymen to-day who venture to expound in their pulpits what was formerly called the "Queen of the Sciences," the science of Christian theology. This used to be their chief business. Of this science they were the acknowledged masters. They were supposed to have the key to the greatest of all earthly problems, and their contentions with each other over the proper solution of it, furnished the chief interest of the intellectual world in all countries. When Dr. Lyman Beecher took the charge of a group of "anxious inquirers" out of the hands of Judge Gould at Litchfield, he did so as a professional man, just as a physician would have taken a case of typhoid fever out of the hands of an apothecary, and the church saw clearly the overwhelming necessity of the judge's deposition. Probably nine out of ten of the members to-day would smile over the good doctor's notion that his skill in dealing with spiritual suffering was, *ex officio*, any greater than the judge's. In fact, authority has departed from the pulpit as a profession. Everybody nowadays acknowledges this, and clergymen feel it.

They feel especially that they have failed in obtaining influence for revealed religion over the great masses of population congregated in modern cities, and yet it is these masses which have raised what is called the "labor problem," and have produced the prodigious economic tumult which the historical school is trying to allay.

That ministers who feel that the old gospel has lost its power to soothe discontent and to account for social evils, should endeavor to get at the point of view of the laboring poor, and should in a large number of cases, through force of sympathy, come to share in their illusions touching the power of government over distribution, is surely very natural. The socialist view of what social arrangements ought to be, is very much like that of the early Christians, and the clergyman's imagination is naturally touched by finding it held by large bodies of his contemporaries. Moreover, was not the world once conquered by an ethical idea, and what is easier than for an ardent preacher to believe that it is not too late to do it over again? It has been maintained in this city in a clerical convention within twenty years, in all seriousness, that the whole world might be, and probably would be, with proper effort, "converted," in the technical sense of that term, within thirty years. What is there very wonderful in the opinion that this conversion might be hastened by a rearrangement, under government superintendence, of the relations of labor and capital.

Moreover, the notion that the economists are to blame for the aberrations of "the benevolent clergymen, ecstatic ladies," and other "prophets and disciples of an industrial millennium," would be more plausible if an industrial millennium were anything new, or if, from the days of Hesiod to our own, the evils of man's condition had not been laid on the greed of the rich, on the pride of the wise and learned, and on the inhumanity of the great, by a long catena of poets, sages, and prophets. That the volume of social discontent is now greater than in former ages is due mainly to the multitude of new problems we have to face, to the immensely improved means of spreading ideas, to the wonderful economic changes effected by science and invention, and, though last not least, to the appearance on the scene of the new schools of political economy to preach the limitlessness of the province of government. But the labor problem remains very much what it has been ever since agriculture was substituted for hunting and fishing—a problem which, in the main, each man must solve for himself.

IDLENESS AND IMMORALITY

ONE of the most curious and interesting political and economical changes of the last hundred years, although it has attracted comparatively little notice, is the transfer of the legislative and administrative branches of government from the rich to the poor. We hear a great deal about the recent transfer of *power* to the people in certain countries, such as France, England, the United States, Germany, Italy, meaning thereby the power of determining at the polls who shall compose the government and what its policy on certain questions shall be. But we hear little about the change in the character of the governing class, which is also a very marked feature of the democratic movement.

Now, the governing class all over Europe was, from the fall of the Roman Empire to the Revolution in France and down to the passage of the Reform Bill in England, and, we may say, down to Andrew Jackson's time in America, the wealthy class; and the wealthy class until the present century were the owners of the soil. Modern Europe was in fact settled, if I may use the expression, on the theory that the landowners were "the country," the "legal country" as the French called it, and that everybody else was in a certain sense a sojourner or interloper. Before the Reform Bill in England, all extension of the suffrage beyond the freeholders, and all admission to Parliament of men who had no property in land, was denounced as committing the public affairs to people who had "no stake in the country." The property qualification for the suffrage which existed in most States of the Union at the Revolution, and confined it to "freeholders," was based on the same assumption, that is, that the nation was made up of those who owned the land in fee simple, and that all others might betray it, or run away from it, or had but a faint interest in its fame or prosperity.

That this notion had good traditional authority there is no denying, for it was the great landed proprietors who evoked some sort of order out of the chaos which followed the invasion of the Barbarians. The man who by force of character and military talent was able to gather a sufficient body of armed followers to protect a certain bit of territory against pillage by marauders, to build a fortified house on it in which his dependents might find temporary shelter for their families and cattle, and guarantee to the cultivators of the soil a fair amount of security while working in the fields, became outwardly the governor of his *protégés*. Far from wishing to share his authority, the great dread of their lives was that he would lay it down or fail to exercise it with sufficient vigor. For similar reasons they were only too glad to have his oldest son assume the same rights and duties on his father's death, and in two or three generations a hereditary landed aristocracy was established, and the reorganized society found it in full possession of all the government there was, and kept it there for a thousand years.

The men who owned the land, too, were during all this period the only wealthy class except the Jews. Land was the only investment which furnished anything that could be called an income. Everybody was more or less afraid to let his property out of his sight, or own property which could be carried away. The name given to land in the nomenclature of the English common law —"real property" or "real estate"—expressed not only the popular notion about it, but described the greatest political and economical fact of the day. The "man of property" was the landed man. He and his followers owned the country, and it seemed for ages perfectly natural and right that they should govern the country.

Now, the peculiarity of landed property which draws its income from rents is that it needs the personal attention of the owner. It used to make him a great man among his tenants, over whose future he exercised much power; and this power was increased in many countries by attaching to it the administration of local justice and the management of the financial affairs of the district or county. The country gentleman for fully twelve hundred years exercised jurisdiction over local affairs and small controversies, besides levying and spending the local taxes. He was, as a rule, consequently an extremely busy man, and became in popular estimation the only real statesman. Even in Burke's day a man of his great political genius was held by the Whigs to be unworthy of a seat in the Cabinet, because he was not connected with the landed gentry. So late as the Peninsular war, that most practical of commanders, Wellington, sent home earnest appeals for officers of "good family," meaning the sons of country gentlemen, as having some special and mysterious superiority in the work of fighting, although he was opposed to an enemy who had overrun Europe with an army led by the sons of butchers, bakers, and tavern-keepers. The necessity for keeping the property together in the hands of the eldest son to enable him to maintain the position of the family in society or politics, compelled the youngest sons to shift for themselves, and in every modern European country they were enabled to shift for themselves by having the public service reserved for them. They officered the army and navy and the diplomatic service, and got all the best places in the civil administration. In fact, John Bright did not exaggerate greatly when, speaking of the period before the introduction of the method of filling subordinate places by competitive examination, he called the public service a "huge system of out-door relief for the younger members of the aristocracy." The French Revolution made the first break in this system in France; but it has lasted in England almost down to our own day, and is still in existence, in a modified degree, in Germany and Austria.

It will be easily seen that this is a description of a state of things in which, as a rule, the owners of the wealth of the country were both its legislators and administrators, and that both the fathers and the sons were kept busy. They all had their duties and responsibilities, either as managers of their own estates, or as local magistrates, or as legislators, or as officers of the army and navy, or of the civil service, or as ministers of the established Church—an organization which in all countries in which it existed, possessed an enormous mass of property. The economical or political revolutions which have occurred within the present century have greatly changed all this. Power has passed from the owners of the land to people of every kind of occupation. The work of legislation has been largely given over to poor men, or the sons of poor men, who in all parliamentary countries except England, draw pay for it. The administrative offices have been thrown open to the same class. The great landowner has been converted almost everywhere into an annuitant, drawing a certain income from his estates, but exerting comparatively little influence on the lives or fortunes of the tenants. In a word, the aristocracy of all countries except Germany has become our idle class. It is literally true of the aristocrats now, that they toil not, neither do they spin. They no longer render the state the service which the old feudal tenures exacted of them, and their enjoyment of large incomes drawn from the industry expended on the soil by others, becomes increasingly difficult to defend in the forum of abstract justice. The great landholders of the world have, in fact, more and more to protect themselves by showing the danger to all property that would probably result from an attack on their particular kind of property. One consequence of this is that the accumulated wealth of the world no longer passes into the land. The passion for "broad acres" has died or is rapidly dying out. The number of people who are "land poor" increases. The extraordinary improvement in the means of communication has, for practical purposes, thrown all the agricultural land of the world into one market, and thereby all the farmers, from China to Peru, compete with each other.

As either a consequence or an accompaniment of this, the accumulated capital of each year is now gathered up by corporations who turn it over in all sorts of industrial enterprises, through the instrumentality of hired employees, and pay the owners a moderate but tolerably sure percentage on it. If it is not disposed of in this way, it goes into government loans, on which interest is paid out of the taxes. Now, the amount of these investments from which men may draw a certain income, without any exertion of mind or body on their own part, is something enormous. The capital invested in the railroads of the world is estimated at $30,000,000,000. The total national debts of the world are estimated at $32,000,000,000. A good deal of this, of course, does not yield interest, but if, on the average, it pays one per cent., the income drawn from it is immense, and we leave out of sight the very large number of various industrial enterprises owned by corporations whose shares may be held by anybody, however unused to and unfit for active business.

The interest on this great sum, of course, goes in a considerable degree into the pockets of men and women who are actively engaged in some sort of industry, and represents their savings. A considerable part of it is devoted to the support of helpless people, widows and orphans, and the aged and infirm. Much of it passes into the treasury of charitable and educational institutions and churches. But it affords also to a large and increasing body of persons of both sexes the means of living lives of absolute leisure, of abstaining, that is to say, from all distasteful labor, from doing the things they do not like to do; and what is perhaps fully as important in its moral aspect is, that it breaks their connection with any particular locality. In the old days before the creation of this great mass of stocks and bonds, nearly every man was bound by ties of some sort to a particular place, in which his presence during the greater part of the year was made necessary by some sort of duty, or from which departure was difficult or inconvenient. Of course this is still true of the great bulk of mankind. The majority of the human race are still in a certain sense *adscripti glebæ*, bound by uncontrollable circumstances to pass their lives in some particular spot of earth. But the proportion which can, if they please, lead nomad lives, that is, can pass from place to place at will and settle themselves for longer or shorter periods in any one that takes their fancy, gains very rapidly and is now very large in every country. England and America supply by far the greater number of these "*heimathlosen*," as the Germans call people who have no fixed domicile, owing doubtless in part to Anglo-Saxon restlessness, but certainly in a very large degree to the large revenue yielded in these countries by various kinds of what we call "interest-bearing securities," or, in other words, to the large number of persons in both countries who have investments which do not call for their personal attention and are made fruitful by other people's management and labor. No doubt a good deal of this migration has serious objects in view—such as health or education. But the proportion of it that is simply aimless wandering in search of new forms of excitement or amusement, is very large and is growing. One of the most marked effects of this migratory habit is a certain volatility which makes it difficult to keep the attention fixed very long on one object or on one species of occupation or amusement, and ends by reducing its victims to a somewhat childish mental condition. Every one who has had any acquaintance with the world of fashion and leisure which is to be found at any of the European winter and summer resorts, must have observed how easily people tire of their amusements and companions, how necessary frequent change of place or pursuit is to their comfort, and how often they remind one of the perennial childish cry, "Mamma, what shall I do next?"

Mr. Gladstone, in discussing Lord Tennyson's "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After," enumerates the changes which have come over England within that period, and mentions as one of the most marked the great increase of this idle class, and he throws on them the burden of justifying their existence. But the increase continues in an accelerated ratio. The last thing in the world they think of is justifying either their existence or the manner of their existence. No class are less given to any species of speculative inquiry or less troubled about the moral aspect of their pursuits. In so far as the members have become serious, it is in desiring new forms of amusement or new places to play in. In fact, they have made amusement a business, and engage in it with an attention to details, a regard to finish and efficiency, which in many cases would be sufficient to insure success in any species of trade or industry. Where they are weak is in want of persistence, for to nothing is a life of amusement more fatal, as I have said, than the power of continuance in any one pursuit. The will becomes gradually weakened under long release from strenuous exertion, and the thing "got up," however successful it may be, soon becomes tiresome.

There is one distraction, however, of which the idle class can hardly be said ever to tire, and which idle people can hardly be considered capable of avoiding, and that is the distraction of love-making under more or less illicit conditions. This is what they fall back on when all else fails or becomes vapid. When men and women are thrown together in the midst of luxury without duties or responsibility, and without exposure to any criticism except what comes from persons similarly situated, the possibilities of scandal grow very rapidly, and the air is soon filled with it. The sexual passion is of all passions the most wayward, watchful, and readiest for temptations. Neither law nor religion, nor tradition nor custom, has yet been able to furnish a force capable of keeping it wholly within the artificial channels which society has provided for it. Propinquity, as is well known, is always liable to rouse it into action even in the most humdrum conditions. The disposition of the "any man" to fall in love with the "any woman" whom he sees most frequently is one of the commonplaces of worldly wisdom. So is the disposition of the "any woman" to see in the "any man" with whom she may be thrown into daily or frequent intercourse, a possible lover. On this very solid anthropological fact the code of propriety which in all countries regulates the intercourse of the sexes has been framed. In semi-barbarous societies it is framed by men, is rigid in its requirements and Draconian in its penalties. In highly civilised societies it is largely framed and enforced by women, and though its provisions have been greatly relaxed and its sanctions much mitigated, nevertheless its basal assumption, as the philosophers say, remains undisturbed. That assumption is that when young persons of both sexes are thrown together with nothing to do, they need, whether married or single, to be closely supervised.

This precise situation does not often arise when people are living in their homes in their own countries. They have their cares and responsibilities, and perhaps work to do. They are surrounded by relatives or friends, and feel the harness of custom and tradition and public opinion in nearly every act of their lives. The first step in the path of vice or folly draws forth warnings which they have been taught by long habit to respect. But when removed from the pressure of these time-honored restraints, as in the large country-houses in England or on the Continent, and as in the fashionable resorts, such as Pau or Monte Carlo, or a score of other places which I need not enumerate, which in our time are crowded with the rich and idle both summer and winter, the air becomes charged with amorous electricity; men and women become, consciously or unconsciously, ready for amorous adventures. There are few women who are not, under such conditions, more or less ready for the mild excitement at least of repelling unlawful advances, and few or no men who do not believe themselves worthy of a *bonne fortune*, and likely to fall in for one any day. Hunting, polo, lawn tennis, gambling, dinner-giving, all pall in the long run, or are confined to certain seasons, but the *ewige Weib* remains as a perennial resource. The annual social chronicles of the Indian *sanitaria* in "the Hills" and of the pleasure resorts of the European continents, contain illustrations in abundance of the tremendous strain which an idle and luxurious life puts on the bonds of the old morality. The murders, the duels, or the elopements which every now and then occur, impressive as they are, give but a slight idea of the moral turmoil which goes on below the surface. Every year contributes its list of catastrophes of which the world never hears, of work made hopelessly repulsive on the very threshold of life, of family peace destroyed beyond recovery, of affections irretrievably diverted from their old and lawful channels, of honest worth covered with ridicule, of high aspirations quenched in a swash of triviality or childish "gayety." The worship of wealth, in its coarsest and most undraped form, too, that is, wealth as a purveyor of meat, drink, clothing, and ornamentation, which goes on in this *milieu*, "makes hay" of all noble standards of individual and social conduct.

Perhaps the very worst influence of the idler, however, is to be found in the effect of the spectacle of their lives on what is called "the labor problem." "The labor problem" is really the problem of making the manual laborers of the world content with their lot. In my judgment this is an insoluble problem. No discoveries nor inventions will ever solve it as long as population continues to press close on the available products of human industry. The causes of the dissatisfaction of the masses with their condition may change from age to age, but the dissatisfaction will continue, and the blame will be always laid on those who have a larger share of the world's goods than others. But there is no question that the existing discontent is, and not unreasonably, aggravated by the spectacle of the enjoyment by the growing idle class, of the benefits of the social and political organizations, without any contribution worth mention to the trouble and cost of maintaining these organizations. The taxes paid by the annuitant or *rentier* class are but a trifling return, in reality, for the security they possess for person and property. The workers of the world provide them with police, with courts of justice, and means of travel—in short, every agency which makes their enjoyment possible, for sums in cash which they would hardly pay to a good club. Reasonably or unreasonably, the masses resent this more and more. It gives mere envy an air of respectability and rationality. They say that even if a good defence may be made for inequality of conditions based on inequality of capacity and services, there ought not in truly democratic communities, to be any people who render no service at all, and who allow others to till, and spin and weave, and police, and fight, and teach, and invent and discover, plough the seas and dig the mines for them, while they look on and draw their quarterly dividends and spend them in childishness; that we shall never have social peace till every man has a fair share of the social burdens.

The arguments in favor of the existence of the class called "men of leisure" are familiar to every one. The contributions of this class to civilization have been very great. There are books of the greatest value to the community which cannot be contributed by busy men. It is only the men of leisure who can look after the artistic side of life, and the artistic side of life has to be cultivated in order to keep man above the contented ox or porker. The services, too, which they render to the state by being allowed to choose their work are often of inestimable value. No one can think of Darwin's, or Grote's, or Cavour's, or Gladstone's, or Howard's, or Motley's pecuniary competency, without thankfulness. Even the socialists share this feeling. It is impossible to say which of all men of leisure will turn their leisure to useful account; and it would be therefore dangerous, even if it were possible, to make a rule prohibiting their existence. The best thing in the world is individual freedom; and a man who is compelled to work by law when there is no fear of his becoming dependent on the labor of others for a livelihood, is to all intents and purposes a slave. Better that ten men should "loaf" than that one should lose his liberty.

But the modern democracy must take on itself part of the blame which it throws on the idlers. The rich are being gradually and relentlessly excluded as a rule from public office in all the democratic countries. There are enough well-to-do men of leisure in New York to give us an excellent city government without payment, except in the subordinate places, were the poor willing to give up their chance of the salaries. Venice, in its best days, secured a large body of good officials by compelling men of fortune to serve in the offices to which they were elected. Berlin has to-day a first-rate common council made up in the same way. But there is very little chance of our seeing this system spread. The most discouraging phenomena of government by universal suffrage thus far, is its strong tendency to treat public offices as "plums" rather than trusts, to be distributed among poor men as rewards for winning elections, and to consider indifference to the salary as a positive disqualification.

As long as this tendency lasts, we fear the alienation of the rich and their disposition to make amusement a serious business will continue, and the chief cure will be found only in the resolute resistance of the individual conscience. Nothing does more in this country to recruit the ranks of the pleasure-seekers than the tendency of rich fathers, backed up in this by the public generally, to treat money-making as the only serious business of life. A young man bred in this notion naturally says to himself when he inherits a fortune: "Money-getting, however laudable a pursuit in itself, is surely only incumbent on those who have not got money or want more of it than they have got. Why should I, who have got all I want, continue to work for it? No, I must enjoy it." And when he has given himself up to the child's life, buying fresh toys every day and throwing them away the next, the only thing which excites the wonder of those of his friends and neighbors who do not envy him, is that he should not have "stayed in business."

The truth is that there has never been an age of the world in which there were such opportunities for men of fortune to find enjoyment in contributions to the general welfare. To some natures philanthropy, pure and simple, is odious, but there remain art, literature, science, agriculture, education. By this last I do not mean simply the instruction of youth either at schools or colleges, but also the work of persuasion through voice and pen. There never has been in the history of the world such a field for orators and writers as a democratic country now offers. There is no nobler nor more fascinating game than the work of changing the opinions of great bodies of men, by inducing them to discard old beliefs and take on new ones, or arresting their rush after strange gods. But very few indeed ever take up any such work late in life. The taste for it must be formed and the equipment provided in youth. Though last, not least, the delusion must be got rid of that there is no use in trying to act on the minds of one's fellow-men unless one can thereby get an office. It is this which makes a great many useful young men wash their hands of politics and go in for polo and tennis and flirtations instead. Official life, as our Government is now organized, has no field for a really high ambition. Public functionaries are becoming more and more the puppets of the managers outside, and the managers are whatever public opinion lets them be or insists on their being. The coming rulers of men are those who mould the thoughts or sway the passions of the multitude.

THE DUTY OF EDUCATED MEN IN A DEMOCRACY

PERHAPS I ought not to say it, but college graduates are not, as a rule, remarkable for the amount of knowledge, properly so called, which they bring away from the universities. Everything they learn there in the way of languages or of science makes a comparatively small impression on the great mass of them. The great use of the college course is the formation of the habit of attention and study at the age when mental and other habits are most easily formed. But a college education has a perceptible general effect on the intellectual outlook. Its most marked effect on men in relation to their duties to the community at large, is in raising their standards. Their notions of how things ought to be done are changed. They expect a good deal more in the character and attainments of public men, and in the order of public business. The municipal government, for instance, which the educated men would set up, if they had their way, would be something considerably different from any municipal government now in existence. Congress and the State legislatures, too, would be, if the suffrage were confined to college graduates, composed of another class of men than that which now fills them. A very large portion of our present legislation would never be enacted, and the probabilities are that the ceremonial side of the government would be much enlarged. I remember that two or three years ago President Eliot wrote in *The Forum*,* pointing out that our municipal government would never be what it ought to be until all our city officials had received a special training for their work, and he mentioned the various kinds of training which they needed. Now this was distinctly the college graduate's view of the matter. The popular mind was not then occupied with the need or the difficulty of getting trained men for such work. It would have been satisfied with men of ordinary honesty. The notion that trained men were a possibility, probably never occurred to the bulk of the citizens.

We should probably, in a college-graduate government, witness the disappearance from legislation of nearly all acts and resolutions which are passed for what is called "politics;" that is, for the purpose of pleasing certain bodies of voters, without any reference to their real value as contributions to the work of government. This would of course effect a very great reduction in the size of the annual statute-book. For, to the mind of the ordinary legislator of to-day, the duty of pleasing the voters is even more obligatory than the duty of furnishing them with good government. In this duty of pleasing the voters there is no question that a college education as a rule unfits a man. He cannot discharge it without a fight with his ideals formed at a susceptible age. James Russell Lowell furnishes an illustration of my meaning. He was unquestionably as patriotic an American as ever lived, and a thorough Democrat. Democracy has never received so fine a tribute as he paid to it in Birmingham. But, somehow, as an educated man, he was out of tune with the multitude. The West never quite took to him. The *New York Tribune* denied him even the right to be considered "a good American." Senator Sherman and other Republicans wrote "Ichabod" on him when he supported Mr. Cleveland. The cause of all this really was that his political standards differed from theirs. He lived in an earlier republic of the mind, in which the legislation was done by first-class men, whom the people elected and followed. In a republic in which the multitude told the legislators what to do, he never really was at home.

---

* Vol. XII., p. 153, October, 1891.

This brings to me the question, what is really the attitude of educated men toward universal suffrage to-day? As a general rule I think they really mistrust or regret it, but accept it as the inevitable. Probably no system of government was ever so easy to attack and ridicule, but no government has ever come upon the world from which there seemed so little prospect of escape. It has, in spite of its imperfections and oddities, something of the majesty of doom, and nobody now pretends that any people can avoid it. There has been, however, a notable change within forty years, in the opinion of the educated class, as to its value, owing to its numerous mistakes; but, curiously enough, these mistakes seem often to be due to the difficulty experienced in finding out what its mind is. Its mass in countries in which it exists, is so large that the process of interrogating it is one of extraordinary difficulty even for the most expert. Politicians, of all varieties, think they know what the people think upon any given question of the day, but most of them are always wrong. There could not be a better illustration of this than the mistake made by Senator Hill, Governor Flower, and other politicians in this State about Maynard's nomination. They had the deepest interest in knowing what the popular judgment on this nomination would be, but fell into an immense error about it.

This difficulty is not likely to decrease, and is likely to produce a great many legislative follies; because, unhappily, it seems to be the way of most politicians in all countries, when puzzled or uncertain about the drift of public sentiment, to choose the course which seems the least wise or most childish, meaning by that the course which seems to promise most immediate gratification, or to display most indifference to remoter results. One consequence of this is that universal suffrage has taken the blame of a great many mistakes for which it is not responsible, and which have come to pass simply owing to want of skill in questioning it on the part of law-makers. But, after all allowances and excuses have been made, its errors are sure to be frequent and on a considerable scale. We may expect, for instance, such mistakes as our silver policy, with increasing frequency, because the politics of the world are becoming more and more a controversy between rich and poor. The influential and the rich men are taking the place of the feudal baron and the absolute monarch as objects of popular attack, and moderate physical comforts for all, or a "living wage," have taken the place of political liberty. But the rich man cannot and will not be openly robbed. He runs no risk of having his head cut off, or his property confiscated. He will probably be got at through experiments in taxation, or in currency, which unfortunately rarely reach the precise objects at which they are aimed, and sooner or later, like the silver purchases, involve the whole community in great distress.

The idea that *distribution* must be, in some manner, reformed, is taking greater and greater hold of the world, and the popular mind is so much impressed with what seems to be the injustice of the present system, that hardly any attention is paid to the size of the earth's dividend. And yet, to divide among the people of every country all the accumulated wealth there is in it, or to divide among them the annual yield of its land and labor, is one of the simplest of arithmetical problems. In no case would any such dividend make any material change in the condition of the great bulk of the population. There is no deduction from the operation of nature more certain than that the earth is not meant to afford much more than a fair subsistence to the dwellers on it. The mass of mankind have been poor from the earliest ages, simply because they multiply close up to the provision which the earth normally makes for them. They have always done so, and probably will always do so, in every country. It is true that their condition has improved since the introduction of steam into the work of production; but their content has not increased, and the contrast between their mode of life and that of the very rich remains about the same. There is no wider interval now between the house of the modern rich man and the laborer's cottage than there was between the castle and the hut of the Middle Ages. If all that needed to be done to make everybody comfortable and contented was to pull down the rich man's palace, and decree that no more should be built, the problem of modern politics would be easy. But the truth is that there is no cure for the evils of our present condition but a great increase in the produce of the earth, without any corresponding increase in population, and without any abatement in the industry, enterprise, and energy of the existing workers. When we think of the enormous resources of the globe which are still untouched, we are apt to forget that, in order to get at them, we have to go on breeding an increased number of men and women, who will keep alive, generation after generation, the old story of unequal and unjust distribution.

But to divide the earth's products equally, or anywhere near equally, among the people, would be to ignore the claims of superior talent, industry, or frugality upon the larger share, or, in other words, to ignore differences of character. I think most educated men will agree that in the long run our civilization could not stand this. All progress has been made hitherto on the competitive principle, which means giving the prize to the best man; and we can hardly conceive of its being made in any other way. To prescribe that no one shall do better than any one else, is to reproduce China.

Now, in the presence of all this, the rôle of the educated man is really a very difficult one. No intelligent man can or ought to ignore the part which hope of better things plays in our present social system. It has largely, among the working classes, taken the place of religious belief. They have brought their heaven down to earth; and are literally looking forward to a sort of New Jerusalem, in which all comforts and many of the luxuries of life, will be within easy reach of all. The great success of Utopian works like Bellamy's shows the hold which these ideas have taken of the popular mind. The world has to have a religion of some kind, and the hope of better food and clothing, more leisure, and a greater variety of amusements, has become the religion of the working classes. Hope makes them peaceful, industrious, and resigned under present suffering. A Frenchman saw a ragged pauper spend his last few cents on a lottery ticket, and asked him how he could commit such a folly. "In order to have something to hope for," he said. And from this point of view the outlay was undoubtedly excusable. It is literally hope which makes the world go round, and one of the hardest things an educated man who opens his mouth about public affairs has to do, is to say one word or anything to dampen or destroy it. Yet his highest duty is to speak the truth.

Luckily, there is one truth which can always be spoken without offence, and that is that on the whole the race advances through the increase of intelligence and the improvement of character, and has not advanced in any other way. The great amelioration in the condition of the working classes in Europe within this century, including the increasing power of the trades-unions, is the result not of any increase of benevolence in the upper classes, but of the growth of knowledge and self-reliance and foresight among the working classes themselves. The changes in legislation which have improved their condition are changes which they have demanded. When a workingman becomes a capitalist, and raises himself in any way above his early condition, it is rarely the result of miracle or accident. It is due to his superior intelligence and thrift. Nothing, on the whole, can be more delusive than official and other inquiries into the labor problem, through commissions and legislative committees. They all assume that there is some secret in the relations of labor and capital which can be found out by taking testimony. But they never find anything out. Their reports during the last fifty years would make a small library, but they never tell us anything new. They are meant to pacify and amuse the laborer, and they do so; but to their constant failure to do anything more we owe some of the Socialist movement. The Socialists believe this failure due to want of will, and that Karl Marx has discovered the great truth of the situation, which is, that labor is entitled to the whole product. The great law which Nature seems to have prescribed for the government of the world, and the only law of human society which we are able to extract from history, is that the more intelligent and thoughtful of the race shall inherit the earth and have the best time, and that all others shall find life on the whole dull and unprofitable. Socialism is an attempt to contravene this law and ensure a good time to everybody independently of character and talents; but Nature will see that she is not frustrated or brought to nought, and I do not think educated men should ever cease to call attention to this fact, that is, ever cease to preach hopefulness, not to everybody, but to good people. This is no bar to benevolence to bad people or any people, but our first duty is loyalty to the great qualities of our kind, to the great human virtues, which raise the civilised man above the savage.

There is probably no government in the world to-day as stable as that of the United States. The chief advantage of democratic government is, in a country like this, the enormous force it can command on an emergency. By "emergency" I mean the suppression of an insurrection or the conduct of a foreign war. But it is not equally strong in the ordinary work of administration. A good many governments, by far inferior to it in strength, fill the offices, collect the taxes, administer justice, and do the work of legislation with much greater efficiency. One cause of this inefficiency is that the popular standard in such matters is low, and that it resents dissatisfaction as an assumption of superiority. When a man says these and those things ought not to be, his neighbors, who find no fault with them, naturally accuse him of giving himself airs. It seems as if he thought he knew more than they did, and was trying to impose his plans on them. The consequence is, that, in a land of pure equality, as this is, critics are always an unpopular class, and criticism is, in some sense, an odious work. The only condemnation passed on the governmental acts or systems is apt to come from the opposite party in the form of what is called "arraignment," which generally consists in wholesale abuse of the party in power, treating all their acts, small or great, as due to folly or depravity, and all their public men as either fools or knaves. Of course this makes but small impression on the public mind. It is taken to indicate not so much a desire to improve the public service as to get hold of the offices, and has, as a general rule, but little effect. Parties lose their hold on power through some conspicuously obnoxious acts or failures; never, or very rarely, through the judgments passed on them by hostile writers or orators. And yet nothing is more necessary to successful government than abundant criticism from sources not open to the suspicion of particular interest. There is nothing which bad governments so much dislike and resent as criticism, and have in past ages taken so much pains to put down. In fact, a history of the civil liberty would consist, largely, of an account of the resistance to criticism on the part of rulers. One of the first acts of a successful tyranny or despotism is always the silencing of the press or the establishment of a censorship.

Popular objection to criticism is, however, senseless, because it is through criticism—that is, through discrimination between two things, customs or courses—that the race has managed to come out of the woods and lead a civilized life. The first man who objected to the general nakedness, and advised his fellows to put on clothes, was the first critic. Criticism of a high tariff recommends a low tariff; criticism of monarchy recommends a republic; criticism of vice recommends virtue. In fact almost every act of life in the practice of a profession or the conduct of a business, condemns one course and suggests another. The word means *judging*, and judgment is the highest of the human faculties, the one which most distinguishes us from the animals.

There is, probably, nothing from which the public service of the country suffers more to-day than the silence of its educated class; that is, the small amount of criticism which comes from the disinterested and competent sources. It is a very rare thing for an educated man to say anything publicly about the questions of the day. He is absorbed in science, or art, or literature, in the practice of his profession, or in the conduct of his business; and if he has any interest at all in public affairs, it is a languid one. He is silent because he does not much care, or because he does not wish to embarrass the administration or "hurt the party," or because he does not feel that anything he could say would make much difference. So that, on the whole, it is very rarely that the instructed opinion of the country is ever heard on any subject. The report of the Bar Association on the nomination of Maynard in New York was a remarkable exception to this rule. Some improvement in this direction has been made by the appearance of the set of people known as the "Mugwumps," who are, in the main, men of cultivation. They have been defined in various ways. They are known to the masses mainly as "kickers;" that is, dissatisfied, querulous people, who complain of everybody and cannot submit to party discipline. But they are the only critics who do not criticise in the interest of party, but simply in that of good government. They are a kind of personage whom the bulk of the voters know nothing about, and find it difficult to understand, and consequently load with ridicule and abuse. But their movement, though its visible recognizable effects on elections may be small, has done inestimable service in slackening the bonds of party discipline, in making the expression of open dissent from party programmes respectable and common, and in increasing the unreliable vote in large States like New York. It is of the last importance that this unreliable vote—that is, the vote which party leaders cannot count on with certainty—should be large in such States. The mere fear of it prevents a great many excesses.

But in criticism one always has hard work in steering a straight course between optimism and pessimism. These are the Scylla and Charybdis of the critic's career. Almost every man who thinks or speaks about public affairs is either an optimist or a pessimist; which he is, depends a good deal on temperament, but often on character. The political jobber or corruptionist is almost always an optimist. So is the prosperous business man. So is nearly every politician, because the optimist is nearly always the more popular of the two. As a general rule, people like cheerful men and the promise of good times. The kill-joy and the bearer of bad news has always been an odious character. But for the cultivated man there is no virtue in either optimism or pessimism. Some people think it a duty to be optimistic, and for some people it may be a duty; but one of the great uses of education is to teach us to be neither one nor the other. In the management of our personal affairs, we try to be neither one nor the other. In business, a persistent and uproarious optimist would certainly have poor credit. And why? Because in business the trustworthy man, as everybody knows, is the man who sees things as they are; and to see things as they are, without glamour or illusion, is the first condition of worldly success. It is absolutely essential in war, in finance, in law, in every field of human activity in which the future has to be thought of and provided for. It is just as essential in politics. The only reason why it is not thought as essential in politics is, the punishment for failure or neglect comes in politics more slowly.

The pessimist has generally a bad name, but there is a good deal to be said for him. To take a recent illustration, the man who took pessimistic views of the silver movement was for nearly twenty years under a cloud. This gloomy anticipation of 1873 was not realized until 1893. For a thousand years after Marcus Aurelius, the pessimist, if I may use the expression, was "cock of the walk." He certainly has no reason to be ashamed of his rôle in the Eastern world for a thousand years after the Mohammedan Hegira. In Italy and Spain he has not needed to hang his head since the Renaissance. In fact, if we take various nations and long reaches of time, we shall find that the gloomy man has been nearly as often justified by the course of events as the cheerful one. Neither of them has any special claim to a hearing on public affairs. A persistent optimist, although he may be a most agreeable man in family life, is likely, in business or politics, to be just as foolish and unbearable as a persistent pessimist. He is as much out of harmony with the order of nature. The universe is not governed on optimistic any more than on pessimistic principles. The best and wisest of men make their mistakes and have their share of sorrow and sickness and losses. So, also, the most happily situated nations must suffer from internal discord, the blunders of statesmen, and the madness of the people. What Cato said in the Senate of the conditions of success, "*vigilando, agendo, bene consulendo, prosperè omnia cedunt*," is as true to-day as it was two thousand years ago. We must remember that, though the optimist may be the pleasantest man to have about us, he is the least likely to take precautions; that is, the least likely to watch and work for success. We owe a great deal of our slovenly legislation to his presence in large numbers in Congress and the legislatures. The great suffering through which we are now passing, in consequence of the persistence in our silver purchases, is the direct result of unreasoning optimism. Its promoters disregarded the warnings of economists and financiers because they believed that—somehow, they did not know how—the thing would come out right in the end. This silver collapse, together with the Civil War over slavery, are striking illustrations to occur in one century, of the fact that, if things come out right in the end, it is often after periods of great suffering and disaster. Could people have foreseen how the slavery controversy would end, what frantic efforts would have been made for peaceful abolition! Could people have foreseen the panic of last year, with its widespread disaster, what haste would have been made to stop the silver purchases! And yet the experience of mankind afforded abundant reason for anticipating both results.

This leads me to say that the reason why educated men should try and keep a fair mental balance between both pessimism and optimism is that there has come over the world in the last twenty-five or thirty years a very great change of opinion touching the relations of the government to the community. When Europe settled down to peaceful work after the great wars of the French Revolution, it was possessed with the idea that the freedom of the individual was all that was needed for public prosperity and private happiness. The old government interference with people's movements and doings was supposed to be the reason why nations had not been happy in the past. This became the creed, in this country, of the Democratic party which came into existence after the foundation of the Federal government. At the same time there grew up here the popular idea of the American character, in which individualism was the most marked trait. If you are not familiar with it in your own time, you may remember it in the literature of the earlier half of the century. The typical American was always the architect of his own fortunes. He sailed the seas and [illegible]netrated the forest, and built cities and lynched the horse-thieves, and fought the Indians and dug the mines, without anybody's help or support. He had even an ill-concealed contempt for regular troops, as men under control and discipline. He scorned government for any other purposes than security and the administration of justice. This was the kind of American that Tocqueville found here in 1833. He says: *

> "The European often sees in the public functionaries simply force; the American sees nothing but law. One may then say that in America a man never obeys a man, or anything but justice and law. Consequently he has formed of himself an opinion which is often exaggerated, but is always salutary. He trusts without fear to his own strength, which appears to him equal to anything. A private individual conceives some sort of enterprise. Even if this enterprise have some sort of connection with the public welfare, it never occurs to him to address himself to the government in order to obtain its aid. He makes his plan known, offers to carry it out, calls other individuals to his aid, and struggles with all his might against any obstacles there may be in his way. Often, without doubt, he succeeds less well than the State would in his place; but in the long run the general result of individual enterprises far surpasses anything the government could do."

Now there is no doubt that if this type of character has not passed away, it has been greatly modified; and it has been modified by two agencies

---

* Democracy in America, Vol. I., p. 157.

—the "labor problem," as it is called, and legislative protection to native industry. I am not going to make an argument about the value of this protection in promoting native industry, or about its value from the industrial point of view. We may or we may not owe to it the individual progress and prosperity of the United States. About that I do not propose to say anything. What I want to say is that the doctrine that it is a function of government, not simply to foster industry in general, but to consider the case of every particular industry, and give it the protection that it needs, could not be preached and practised for thirty years in a community like this, without modifying the old American conception of the relation of the government to the individual. It makes the government, in a certain sense, a partner in every industrial enterprise, and makes every Presidential election an affair of the pocket to every miner and manufacturer and to his men; for the men have for fully thirty years been told that the amount of their wages would depend, to a certain extent, at least, on the way the election went. The notion that the government owes assistance to individuals in carrying on business and making a livelihood has, in fact, largely through the tariff discussions, permeated a very large class of the community, and has materially changed what I may call the American outlook. It has greatly reinforced among the foreign-born population the socialistic ideas which many bring here with them, of the powers and duties of the State toward labor, for it is preached vehemently by the employing class.

What makes this look the more serious is that our political and social manners are not adapted to it. In Europe, the State is possessed of an administrative machine which has a finish, efficacy, and permanence unknown here. Tocqueville comments on its absence among us, and it is, as all the advocates of civil-service reform know, very difficult to supply. All the agencies of the government suffer from the imposition on them of what I may call non-American duties. For instance, a custom-house organized as a political machine was never intended to collect the enormous sum of duties which must pass through its hands under our tariff. A post-office whose master has to be changed every four years to "placate" Tammany, or the anti-Snappers, or any other body of politicians, was never intended to handle the huge mass which American mails have now become. One of the greatest objections to the income tax is the prying into people's affairs which it involves. No man likes to tell what his income is to every stranger, much less to a politician, which our collectors are sure to be. Secrecy on the part of the collector is, in fact, essential to reconcile people to it in England or Germany, where it is firmly established; but our collectors sell their lists to the newspapers in order to make the contributors pay up.

In all these things we are trying to meet the burden and responsibilities of much older societies with the machinery of a much earlier and simpler state of things. It is high time to halt in this progress until our administrative system has been brought up to the level even of our present requirements. It is quite true that, with our system of State and Federal Constitutions laying prohibitions on the Legislature and Congress, any great extension of the sphere of government in our time seems very unlikely. Yet the assumption by Congress, with the support of the Supreme Court, of the power to issue paper money in time of peace, the power to make prolonged purchases of a commodity like silver, the power to impose an income tax, to execute great public works, and to protect native industry, are powers large enough to effect a great change in the constitution of society and in the distribution of wealth, such as, it is safe to say, in the present state of human culture, no government ought to have and exercise.

One hears every day from educated people some addition to the number of things which "governments" ought to do, but for which any government we have at present is totally unfit. One listens to them with amazement, when looking at the material of which our government is composed, for the matter of that, of which all governments are composed, for I suppose there is no question that all legislative bodies in the world have in twenty years run down in quality. The parliamentary system is apparently failing to meet the demands of modern democratic society, and is falling into some disrepute; but it would seem as if there was at present just as little chance of a substitute of any kind as of the dethronement of universal suffrage. It will probably last indefinitely, and be as good or as bad as its constituents make it. But this probable extension of the powers and functions of government make more necessary than ever a free expression of opinion, and especially of educated opinion. We may rail at "mere talk" as much as we please, but the probability is that the affairs of nations and of men will be more and more regulated by talk. The amount of talk which is now expended on all subjects of human interest—and in "talk" I include contributions to periodical literature—is something of which a previous age has had the smallest conception. Of course it varies infinitely in quality. A very large proportion of it does no good beyond relieving the feelings of the talker.

Political philosophers maintain, and with good reason, that one of its greatest uses is keeping down discontent under popular government. It is undoubtedly true that it is an immense relief to a man with a grievance to express his feelings about it in words, even if he knows that his words will have no immediate effect. Self-love is apt to prevent most men from thinking that anything they say with passion or earnestness will utterly and finally fail. But still it is safe to suppose that one-half of the talk of the world on subjects of general interest is waste. But the other half certainly tells. We know this from the change in ideas from generation to generation. We see that opinions which at one time everybody held became absurd in the course of half a century—opinions about religion and morals and manners and government. Nearly every man of my age can recall old opinions of his own, on subjects of general interest, which he once thought highly respectable, and which he is now almost ashamed of having ever held. He does not remember when he changed them, or why, but somehow they have passed away from him. In communities these changes are often very striking. The transformation, for instance, of the England of Cromwell into the England of Queen Anne, or of the New England of Cotton Mather into the New England of Theodore Parker and

Emerson, was very extraordinary, but it would be very difficult to say in detail what brought it about, or when it began. Lecky has some curious observations, in his "History of Rationalism," on these silent changes in new beliefs *apropos* of the disappearance of the belief in witchcraft. Nobody could say what had swept it away, but it appeared that in a certain year people were ready to burn old women as witches, and a few years later were ready to laugh at or pity any one who thought old women could be witches. "At one period," says he, "we find every one disposed to believe in witches; at a later period we find this predisposition has silently passed away." The belief in witchcraft may perhaps be considered a somewhat violent illustration, like the change in public opinion about slavery in this country. But there can be no doubt that it is talk—somebody's, anybody's, everybody's talk—by which these changes are wrought, by which each generation comes to feel and think differently from its predecessor. No one ever talks freely about anything without contributing something, let it be ever so little, to the unseen forces which carry the race on to its final destiny. Even if he does not make a positive impression, he counteracts or modifies some other impression, or sets in some train of ideas in some one else, which helps to change the face of the world. So I shall, in disregard of the great laudation of silence which filled the earth in the days of Carlyle, say that one of the functions of an educated man is to talk, and, of course, he should try to talk wisely.

WHO WILL PAY THE BILLS OF SOCIALISM?

If I were to visit a friend of very moderate means, who was living very simply in a flat, in a remote part of the city, and he were to tell me that he was going to move into a house on Fifth or Madison Avenue; that he was tired, as was his family, of the very restricted life he had been leading; that he meant to give his children better quarters, better clothing, a better education, and more frequent access to the world of fashion and amusements, than they had previously had, I should conclude that he had received, in some way, a considerable addition to his income. But if I found, on inquiry, that not one cent or only a few hundred dollars had been added to it, I should conclude that the poor fellow was insane; that he was laboring under the well-known hallucination called plutomania.

Now I am very much in the same state of mind about the Socialists and ethical economists that I would be about him. I have, during the last two years, been reading a great deal of socialistic literature, ending the other day with Kidd's "Social Evolution." The principal thing which I have learned from it all is that we are on the eve of a great social transformation. The régime of slavery has passed away; and the régime of feudalism has passed away; and the régime of competition is to pass away, and that before very long. The process began a few years ago, I am told, with the overthrow of the Manchester School. That school taught the doctrine of *laissez faire* as the best rule of living for the community. It taught individualism. It taught that the least possible government was the best. It reasoned about all social topics from the "economic man," a person whose main desire was to get money with the least possible amount of exertion. It was willing to let the ablest man get the best things in life, and so on.

I learn that this is all now to be changed, not because it is not scientific, but because it is disagreeable or inhuman. Government is to interfere a good deal. It is first of all to take possession of the gas- and water-works, the railroads and telegraphs of the country. By and by it is to take possession of all the instruments of production, and see that nobody ever wants work. All the very rich men and the idle men are to disappear, and everybody is to be moderately well off. The differences, whatever they are, between workingmen and other people are to come to an end. According to Kidd, the workingmen are to have the same "social position" as every one else, because "moderate income is to give as good a social position as a large one." "The position of the lower classes is to be raised at the expense of the wealthier classes." "Education in its highest forms"—which I suppose means college education—is to be within the reach of everybody, and not, as now, the privilege of the well-to-do only. "The sphere of action of the State is to extend to every department of our social life." I might quote indefinitely to this effect from Marshall, from the Fabian "school" of economists, the "historical school" in Germany, and the Ely "school" in this country. In the world which they not only promise us, but which they say is now really near at hand, there will be no distinction of classes. Workingmen and their children will have exactly the same opportunities which professional men and people of moderate means now have. They will have their dinners, their balls, their theatres, their summer trips, their short hours of labor, their libraries, museums, and so forth. I am told this great change is coming very fast, though, as far as I can see, the signs of it are only to be found, as yet, in authors' studies and in college lecture-rooms. Mr. Kidd's authorities about it are chiefly the monthly magazines, Marshall, and an interview with W. T. Stead. The Fabian School cites no authorities at all, producing the whole change deductively out of its own head. Professor Ely bases his beliefs also on his own intuitions. A very large part of the work is to be wrought through "ethics," or "the science of ethics," which, I believe, is the name given by the various schools to the opinions of some of their members about the injustices of the competitive or present system.

I do not, as I have said, see any signs of the new régime in the world outside, except in extension of government interference to some enterprises, "affected," as our courts say, "with a public use." But no hard-and-fast line between government business and private business was ever drawn, even by the unfortunate Manchester School. What John Stuart Mill—whom I suppose I may describe as speaking for them, at all events to some extent—said, was that the question what things government should take charge of itself, and not leave to private enterprise, is to be settled by judgment, just as the question what things the head of a family should buy and what make at home, has to be settled by judgment. Government is, from the outset, a joint-stock enterprise. To say that it may run a post-office, but must on no account carry on a gas-factory or water-works, would be absurd. But whether, besides running a post-office, it should also run gas-works and water-works, depends on time and place and circumstances. To allow the city government of New York to do things which it is perfectly safe to let the corporation of Birmingham or Berlin do, would be extremely foolish. The truth is that the business of man in this world is to make himself as happy and comfortable as liability to death and disease will let him, and not to carry out the theories of "schools" or doctrinaires.

I make this little digression to get rid of the supposition that anything the civilized governments of the world are doing—and have done—for the convenience of their citizens, is to be considered the beginning of any great "movement" or "evolution." They have done nothing as yet which interferes seriously with any man's rational liberty. It makes no difference to me where I get my gas, or water, or transportation, provided I get it good and pure, provided I am not forced to take it if I do not want it, and provided I am not compelled to pay for anybody else's supply. I may say much the same thing of the education of children. Numerous experiments have shown me in various countries that if the State does not undertake the education of children, they will not be educated, and I am so sensible of the value of education to our civilization that I am well satisfied if the State should do it; nay, I insist that the State shall do it. I maintain, therefore, that no beginning of an evolution, or of an organic change in human society, has yet been made by any State. Whatever we are to have in that line is still to come, and it is of what is to come—that is, of what we are promised or threatened with—that I here concern myself.

As I said at the beginning of this article, when a man is about to move into a larger house and change his whole manner of life, he is, if sane, sure to ask himself what the change will cost, that is, what increase in his expenditures it will make necessary. If sane, also, he will follow this question by another, namely, Have I got the money? Now, in reading these stories to which I have referred, of the social evolution through which modern communities are to pass shortly, I find absolutely no allusion to cost. It is quite evident that, when the change comes about, it will make a great increase in the mere living expenses of every civilized population, without any increase of income that I can see or hear of. In this it will differ from all previous evolutions or revolutions. When the world gave up slavery, it substituted for a very wasteful form of labor a much more productive one. When, in the eighteenth century, it emancipated the peasantry from the kings and nobles, it gave a great impetus to their industry. It relieved them of enormous burdens incurred for the benefit of idle and frivolous men, and it greatly increased the motives for saving. The French Revolution gave a powerful stimulus to agriculture, and much enlarged the income of the working farmer. In like manner, in England, the introduction of the factory régime made large additions to the national income, and, through this, raised the wages and the standard of living of the working population. What Sidney Godolphin Osborne did by sending the Wiltshire farm-laborers to the North tells the whole story. In fact, the history of all the social and industrial changes of the civilized world during the past hundred years is, in the main, the history of great improvements in money-making, the history of additions both to the national and the individual income. The Manchester School has been much blamed for attaching too much importance to this, for thinking too much of additions to wealth without concerning itself as to the manner in which it was distributed. I am not concerned to defend it against this charge. My point is, that, ever since the fall of the Roman Empire, changes in the social condition of the civilized world have meant great improvements in the social income. No matter who got the money, more of it came in. Everybody who changed his style of living—barring, of course, spendthrifts and swindlers—did so because he knew his means permitted it.

The peculiarity of the social evolution which the philosophers say is now impending is, that it is to be not a money-making, but a spending evolution. Everybody is to live a great deal better than he has been in the habit of living, and to have far more fun. Poverty is to disappear, and real destitution — what the French call "*la misère*"—to become unknown except as the result of gross misconduct. I was one day last winter in the University Settlement in Delancey Street, New York, and paid a visit to the rooms in the top story of the building occupied by Dr. Stanton Coit and his fellow-laborers. They were very neatly and comfortably furnished, but perfectly simple and plain. Dr. Coit explained to me that the aim of those who furnished them was to show the kind of rooms every workingman would have "if justice were done." I have since inquired what the rent of those rooms would be to-day in that neighborhood, and am told it would be about $750 a year, or about $14.50 per week. But I am also told that $14.50 is about the rent which the better class of laborers now pay for their rooms *per month*. The general run of unskilled laborers do not pay over $10 per month; so that, to do "justice" to a workingman in this one particular, would cost somebody about $43 a month. Who is this to be? A rent of $58 per month ought, according to the ordinary calculations, to argue an income of $290 per month. What workingman gets this? If he does not get it, and ought to have it, who is keeping him out of it?

What is the real working-class trouble? What is it that makes their condition a "problem?" Why has it become a question of growing importance in the politics of all European countries, as well as in our own? Why are so many books and pamphlets written about it? Why do so many people feel or affect a deep interest in it? Why does it call out so much "ethical" discussion? Why are we threatened with "social evolution" as a means of settling it?

The answer to all these questions is very simple. It is the workingman's want of money which makes him the object of so much pity, and dread, and speculation. If he were better paid—as well paid as a clerk, a clergyman, a lawyer, a doctor, a business man—all the fuss we make about him would be an impertinence. We should bestow no consideration on his food, or clothing, or education, or on his "elevation," or on the elevation of his family. We should have no "ethical concepts" about him. So that the labor question is the question why the workingman does not have more money. The answer is that he gets now all there is for him, and that, if he is to have more, it must come from some great and sudden increase of production unattended with a great increase of population. The income of this and every other country in the world, since the plunder of foreign nations has ceased, is the product of its land and labor. Some of this income goes to pay wages, some goes to repair machinery and buildings, and some goes to pay profits to capital, or, in other words, to reward men for saving or for supplying long-felt wants. Consequently, to do justice to the laborer and greatly increase his comforts, so that he shall be as well off as anybody else, we must cut down the profits or interest on capital, or seize the capital, unless some hitherto unknown source of supply has been discovered.

Now let us see what would be the result of distributing among labor *all* the profit and interest on capital of the entire country. It must be observed, however, that, if we took it all, capital would promptly disappear, and next year, or the year after, labor would have to depend on its own resources. Besides this, the socialistic programme makes no provision for saving; the money is all to go in furniture, or amusements, and transportation. The capitalistic or saving class—or, in other words, the class which every year keeps back part of the national income for use next year—will vanish from the scene. We believe "the State" is, in the new régime, to play the part of the capitalist, but it could not withhold from labor the means of living with the comfort required by the new creed.

The total wealth of the United States, according to the census of 1890—that is, the total existing product of land, labor, and saving—was $65,037,091,197; the population of the country was at the same date 62,622,250. Evenly divided, this would give $1,039 per caput, or a little more than $5,000 per family on the commonly accepted basis of five persons to a family. If the laborer spent his $5,000 at once in making himself comfortable, of course, he would, as well as the country at large, be worse off than ever. He would, in fact, be plunged at once into a very hopeless kind of poverty. But suppose he invested it; it would not yield him over, say, six per cent. at present rates of interest. This would make his income $300 a year, or about $6 a week. It is evident that he could on this make no material change in his style of living. Six dollars a week does not go far in rent and furniture and dinners and amusements. We have no statistics showing the annual income of the United States, but if we put it down as six per cent. on the total accumulated wealth, we shall certainly not underestimate it. This interest would be $3,902,225,472, which, divided among the population, would give $62.31 a head, or $311.55 per family of five persons — that is, less than a dollar a day.

This does not differ materially from the results obtained in Great Britain. Robert Giffen, the English statistician, in one of his most elaborate articles a few years ago, estimated the total capital of the people of the United Kingdom, or the accumulated wealth of the nation, at £8,500,000,000 sterling, the population at that time being almost exactly 34,000,000, thus giving each individual $1,250 per caput, or about $6,000 per family, counting, as before, five to a family. If this were invested in England, it would hardly give more than four per cent., or $240 a year, which would be a pleasant addition to wages, but would leave no margin for amusements, travel, books, or "swell" clothing. We have no means of getting at the wealth of well-to-do people in the United States, there being as yet no reliable statistics bearing on that subject; but an analysis of the income-tax returns in Great Britain shows that in a year when 456,680 persons were assessed, 118,830 had incomes over £300 a year, the total being £110,565,955. On the assumption that these people ought to be despoiled and made to share with their less fortunate brethren, let us see what would happen. The population of the kingdom in the year these returns were made was 37,176,464. If the income, then, of people having more than £300 a year were divided among the masses per capita, it would give each individual an income of about £3, or $15, annually. I always wonder, when reading the romances of the ethical economists, whether they have ever taken the trouble to look at these figures. Apparently they have not. If they had, we should assuredly, unless they have gone clean daft, hear less talk about what "the State" or the municipality can and ought to do for the elevation of the poor. The State has no money which it does not wring from the hard earnings of sorely pressed people. If it took, as we see here, every cent they had, it would not be able to make a very noticeable change in the laborer's condition, even for a single year. What the rich spend on themselves is only a drop in the bucket, and they can secure none of their luxuries without sharing with the laborer, through investment.

The notion that there is a reservoir of wealth somewhere, either in the possession of the Government or the rich, which might be made to diffuse "plenty through a smiling land," is a delusion which nearly all the writings of the ethical economists tend to spread, and it is probably the most mischievous delusion which has ever taken hold on the popular mind. It affects indirectly large numbers of persons, who, if it were presented to them boldly and without drapery, would probably repudiate it. But it steals into their brains through sermons, speeches, pamphlets, Fabian essays, and Bellamy utopias, and disposes them, on humanitarian grounds, to great public extravagances, in buildings, in relief work, in pensions, in schools, in high State wages, and philanthropic undertakings which promise at no distant day to land the modern world in bankruptcy. It will be very well if the century closes without witnessing this catastrophe in France or Italy, or both—the two countries in which the democratic theory of the inexhaustibility of State funds has been carried furthest. It is diffusing through the working class of all countries, also, more and more every day, not only envy and hatred of the rich, but an increasing disinclination to steady industry, and an increasing disposition to rely on politics for the bettering of their condition. The Unions in England have already announced openly that it is no longer to strikes, but to Parliament, they must look for elevation, and, of course, all that Parliament can do for them is either to give them more money for less labor, or to spend other people's money on them in increasing their comforts.

This indifference to cost, or unwillingness to say where the money is to come from to make all the world happy and comfortable, is not confined, by any means, to our American and English Socialists. It is an equally marked characteristic of those of the Continent. Says the Paris *Temps*, speaking of that latest scheme of pensioning all old people:

> "What are the usual tactics of Radicals and Socialists? They call with loud cries for reforms of all sorts, and vote the principle of them, but always refuse to discuss their financial consequences. More than this, they are among the first to vote remissions of taxes. On one side they swell the expenses; on the other they diminish the resources."

At Roubaix, the other day, the mayor proposed the following resolution: "All invalid laborers and all children should be supported by the Commune and the State." Somebody then asked him where the Commune and the State were to get the money. His answer was: "The money will be taken wherever it can be found." As Director Ely says, it was to be done from a "broad social stand-point," and "the general social effect" only—not cost—was to be considered.

Next in importance to the delusion that there is somewhere a great reservoir of wealth, which can still be drawn on for the general good, is the delusion that there is somewhere a reservoir of wisdom still untapped which can be drawn on for the execution of a new law of distribution. Not only is this current, but some of the philosophers have got into their heads that if our politicians had more money to spend, and more places to bestow, they would become purer and nobler and more public-spirited. This theory is so much opposed to the experience of the human race, that we are hardly more called on to argue against it than against the assertion that there will be no winter next year. We must take it for granted that what is meant is that there is somewhere a class of men, whose services are now lost to the world, who would come into the field for the work of production and distribution under the new régime, and display a talent and discretion and judgment, which now cannot be had either for love or money, for the ordinary work of the world. Any salary is, to-day, small for a competent railroad, mining, or mill-manager; but we are asked to believe that when the State took charge of the great work of clothing and feeding and employing the community, men would be found in abundance to see that "ideal justice" was done, at about $3,000 a year. Well, there is no sign of such men at present. Nobody knows of their existence. The probabilities of biology, physiology, psychology, and sociology are all against their existence. The opportunities for display of their talents even now are immense, and yet they do not appear. Nobody says he has ever seen them. Nobody pretends that they could be found, except the ethical economists, and they never mention their names or habitat. In fact, as in Bellamy's case, the writers of the social romances are compelled to make them unnecessary by predicting a change in human nature which will make us all wise, just, industrious, and self-denying.

I think, on the whole, it would not be an exaggeration to say that such a social evolution as the ethical economists have planned could not be accomplished, even for a single year, without doubling the wealth of every country which tried it, while making no increase in the population. And this arrest of the growth of the population is just as necessary as the increase of wealth. For it is the exertions of mankind in keeping up and increasing their numbers which have prevented the poor from profiting more by the recent improvements in production. Statistics show readily that, thus far, subsistence increases more rapidly than population, and this does much to cheer up the optimists and the revilers of Malthus. But to make a man of any use to civilization, he must in some manner be able to pay for his board. If wheat costs only ten cents a bushel, the man who has not and cannot get the ten cents is clearly a bit of surplus population. He has to depend on some one else for his support, and is thus a burden to the community. Employing him at the public expense does not change the situation, for his neighbors are the public. If they really wanted the work done, he would have something to exchange. If they do it in order to keep him from starving, the demand for his labor is not legitimate, and is only a thin disguise for charity. Population and subsistence are equally balanced, in an economical sense, only when there is a full demand for all the labor that offers itself, a state of things which is never seen now in any of the great towns of the world. Let a strike but take place in any branch of unskilled or only slightly skilled labor, and the swarm of applicants for the vacant places, who instantly appear, shows that there is in that spot an excess of people. That is to say, statistics may prove that food has far outrun the population of the United States at large, and yet there will be in New York and Boston and Philadelphia thousands who find it very difficult to purchase it at any price. The Socialists have no plan of dealing with this, except making the successful support the unsuccessful, the industrious the idle, on the same scale of comfort as their own.

I have also learned from my reading that a new "law of distribution" is under consideration in the colleges and ethical schools of the world, and that there is a fair prospect that one which will satisfy all existing needs will be evolved. Now, there are only three laws of distribution of which I can form any conception. One would be a natural law, like the law of gravitation, which automatically divided among all concerned, as soon as completed, the results of any given piece of production, without any care on the part of anybody, and of which nobody could complain any more than of the earth's attraction. Another would be a law formed by some authority, which everybody would acknowledge as final, and to which all would submit, either owing to the overwhelming force at its command, or to the universal confidence in its justice. The third would be the present law, which I may call the law of general agreement, under which everybody gets the least for which he will labor, and the least for which he will save and invest. If there be any other than these, I am unable to think it.

The first of these, I presume, does not need discussion. There never will be any natural distributive force to which we shall all have to submit as we submit to the law of chemical affinity or proportion. The division of the products of labor and capital will always be the subject of some sort of human arrangement, in which the human will will play a more or less prominent part. So that the second of these laws would have to be the result of some kind of understanding as to who or what the deciding authority should be, to which all would have to submit without murmuring. Thus far in the history of mankind it has never been possible to come to such an agreement even on matters touching the feelings much less nearly than one's share of the products of one's labor. No government, spiritual or temporal, has ever existed, which had not to keep in subjection a hostile minority by the use of force in some shape. The Pope in the Middle Ages came nearer seeming the voice of pure justice than any other power that has ever appeared in the Western world. But Christendom was never unanimously willing to let him arrange even its political concerns, and I do not think it ever entered into the head of the most enthusiastic papist to let him arrange his domestic affairs—so far as to say what his wages or his profits should be. The guilds came near doing this in various trades, but their authority was maintained by the power of expulsion. When the whole of civil society becomes a guild, this power cannot be exercised, because there will be no place for the expelled man to go. To make him submit, there would have to be some sort of compulsion put upon him. In other words, he would have to be enslaved by being compelled to labor against his will for a reward which he deemed inadequate. Except on the assumption, which the smallest knowledge of human nature makes ridiculous, that everybody is sure to be satisfied with what he gets for his work, any law of distribution emanating from a human authority would necessarily result in slavery. In truth it is impossible to conceive any plan of State socialism which would not involve the slavery of some portion of the population, unless we can picture to ourselves unanimity concerning the things on which men under all previous régimes have been most apt to differ.

It is hardly necessary to discuss the chances of a "State" composed of men of such acknowledged wisdom and goodness that nobody would dispute their ordering of his domestic concerns. But, improbable as this is, it is by no means so improbable as a State composed of men competent to meet the Socialists' demands in their business capacity. The ethical economists never go into details on this subject. They assume, as does Schmoller, that the State—that is, the small body of men charged with the enormous responsibilities of a socialist or semi-socialist community, both with its production and distribution, and the care of its health and morals—would in some manner be a sort of concentration of the virtue and morals of the whole community; that it would, in addition, have an amount of administrative power, for which railroads, mines, and mills now vainly offer almost any salary, and for which nations would give every conceivable earthly honor and reward—fame, power, money, and enthusiastic homage—could they get them for the management of their finances or the command of their armies. As this assumption is so gross and bold that there is curiously little discussion about it, and as its basis is never explained, it may be dismissed as chimæra.

Mr. Kidd makes mention, among Socialists' expectations, the expectation that some day the laborer will have the same "social position" as the more well-to-do classes, that is, what the French call the *bourgoisie*—the men who wear black coats and do no manual labor. "Social position" is an extremely vague phrase, and yet I think there is probably more hope for the working classes in this direction than in any other. The Socialists mean, I presume, by sameness of social position, association for purposes of social enjoyment on a footing of equality and with reciprocity of pleasure. But the difficulties in the way of this consummation, though on the surface trifling, and, like the thing itself, hard to define, are nevertheless likely to prove very troublesome. The old feudal feeling which made the man who employed labor look down on the laborer as an inferior or semi-menial person, has hardly reached this country, or, if it ever did reach it, has died out. Society is consequently divided by what we may call natural lines—that is, by differences of taste, of personal habits, of mental culture, and social experience. People of the same "social position" are, as a rule, people who live in much the same way—that is, with about the same expenditure in clothes, furniture, and cookery, and are drawn together by some sort of community either of ideas or of interests.

But any change which goes on in the way of development or "evolution," in this arrangement, is in the direction of bringing people together socially who do *not* live in exactly the same way, do not belong to the same caste or circle or class. In those countries in which the democratic movement has made most advances and made most impression on the manners—France, Italy, and the United States, for instance—differences of fortune are less and less potent in preventing social intercourse. But in no country has the workingman made his way as yet into anything that can be called "society," that is, into any circle which gives "social position." Nor could he be introduced into it by any sort of legislation or any species of compulsion. "Social position" is something beyond the reach of armies or fleets or parliaments. It must be won in some manner. It cannot be accorded or decreed. The difference between a lady's drawing-room full of guests, and a wigwam packed with squaws and warriors, tells better than even science, or art, or laws, or government, the distance the community has travelled in its upward course.

THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN 1896

THE country is suffering to-day from two sequelæ of the civil war. One is the currency question, and the other the tariff question. Of neither of them, as national questions of momentous interest, had anybody the smallest idea before the war. What the political prophets thought would follow it, were great disorder in the South and great difficulty in persuading the army to go back to civil life and peaceful industry, and, possibly, in persuading the people to pay the national debt. None of these perplexities has come upon us. The troubles which have come upon us are a strong desire to debase the currency and to levy heavy taxation for protective purposes. These two problems to-day constitute almost the sum total of our politics, and they present themselves in an extremely unmanageable form.

The plan of making money go farther, by debasing or depreciating it, is a very old one. It is not quite as old as metallic money, but it is as old as legal tender. There was no use in debasing the medium of exchange so long as nobody was obliged to take it in return for his goods, or in payment of what was due to him. But so soon as the issue of money became a governmental function, the practice of adulteration, or clipping, or in some manner altering it, so as to retain its purchasing or liquidating power, while lowering its real value, became very general. The Greeks resorted to it; so did the Romans. So have nearly all modern nations. But until our time it has always been a device for the easy payment of public debts. It was the favorite resort of embarrassed governments before the days of public loans. It was the government that was to get the benefit of it, not private individuals. That it was a fraudulent device, and that it was a thing, if possible, to be concealed, nobody ever denied. History may be searched in vain for any assertion of its morality. To see that it must always have been looked upon as dishonest, one has only to ask one's self why men invented money, and why it has continued in use. They invented it, and have clung to it, simply as a measure of value; that is, a small portable memorandum of the worth of something they have parted with, which shall procure them, on presentation, something as valuable as that thing. This is the explanation of the practice of hoarding, or hiding gold and silver coins, which has prevailed in all ages. People have buried them in the ground, or concealed them in holes and corners, in the belief and expectation that no matter how long they might be kept out of sight and out of use, their purchasing power would remain unchanged. Sovereigns traded on this popular belief in the steadiness of their value, by lowering this value secretly. But, as I have said, it was only sovereigns who resorted to this mode of raising the wind, and it was so easy that down to the seventeenth century nearly all sovereigns resorted to it. They were the official keepers of the national measure, and they privately shortened it for their own benefit. They enlarged the power of regulating the currency into the power of "scaling" their own debts.

During our civil war we followed their example. We issued debased currency—that is, dollars that were of inferior value to real dollars—and, in our distress, not only paid the public debts with them, but authorized all debtors to do the same thing to their creditors. We excused this on the same ground on which we excused our killing people or destroying property at the South, namely, that it was necessary to save the life of the nation. Congress had the right of every government to preserve its own existence by any means necessary for the purpose. The country accepted this view of the matter. Our Government, we said, has issued debased money as a matter of necessity. There has been no concealment about it, and it will all be made right in the end. Its dollars are bad dollars. The reason it issued them was the same as that for which it has destroyed thousands of lives and vast amounts of property.

When the war was over, however, a very curious thing happened. Some people came forward and said: "We see these dollars of yours are really not money, in the strict sense of the term, but promises to pay money. You say you issued them during the war on the plea of necessity. The war has now been over for some years, and the necessity has disappeared. Is it not time that you paid them, or at all events cease to compel people to take them in payment of their debts?" The answer to these questions came from the Supreme Court in what were known as the Legal Tender Cases.[1] The court said that the power to regulate the currency, which every government must have, was really a power to make any kind of money it pleased; that it had power not only to stamp and weigh the metal or metals which mankind has in all ages agreed to regard as the only true money, the only safe measure of value, but to make money out of any metal or

[1] The effect of these decisions will be found summed up in Chap. lvii. of Hare's "American Constitutional Law."

other material, to issue it instead of the money actually current, to raise or lower its value in the market, and to give it any name it thought proper—to call, for instance, a piece of paper ten inches by four "One dollar," or to declare a piece of copper or platinum to be of the same value as a circular piece of gold weighing $25\frac{8}{10}$ grains, and usable for the same purposes;—that therefore its paper promises to pay money were, to all intents and purposes, money. All the discussion which has raged among lawyers over this decision has turned upon the constitutionality of it, not on the justice or honesty of it. The court judged of the power of Congress in this matter of currency by analogy. It said that Congress must have the power over the currency as an "incident of sovereignty," which all the old governments have had, and the definition of sovereignty was obtained by observing the practice of sovereigns. Turning to history, it found that all the older governments had depreciated the currency for their own benefit, but I do not believe it found one champion of the right to do it, or that any one of these governments ever publicly claimed such a right for itself. So that we have clothed our Government with a power which no other government has ever possessed in the forum of morals. The right to punish people for their religious opinions might in fact be recognised, with more force, as an "incident of sovereignty" on the same grounds. "*Cujus regio ejus religio*" was an accepted maxim of European public law for a thousand years.

Out of this decision has grown our currency question, as we see it to-day. So soon as the people of the United States heard from the mouths of their judges that their Government had the power not only to regulate money,—that is, to weigh, stamp, and give it a name,—but to choose the material for it, and fix its value, a large party sprang up, commanding a majority in Congress, and demanded that the Government should go to work to make money out of paper, and pay its debts with it. This party was beaten, after a hard struggle, by the aid of various arguments, of which the foremost was that, paper having no intrinsic value, Congress might increase it to any extent it pleased, and it would thus soon become worthless, —witness the Continental paper, the French assignats, and the Confederate money. The greenbackers then abandoned the field, or were in the fair way of abandoning it, when silver began to fall heavily. It at once seemed to them that here was something cheap, comparatively easy to get hold of, and therefore peculiarly suited to the needs of the poor, which was already in use as currency in many countries, and would be nearly as good as greenbacks as a means of restoring prosperity. It could not be said of it, as had been said of the greenback, that it had no intrinsic value. It had value, apart from its use as money. It was a metal. Moreover, Congress could not increase the quantity of it at pleasure, as it could increase the quantity of greenbacks. Its amount was fixed by nature.

Then there grew up about silver a remarkable amount of legendary matter. The ancient idea that money was a measure of value seemed to fade away. To the demand of those who insisted that gold should be retained in circulation, and that silver should, as money, bear some fixed ratio to it, the answer was made that we could, by legislation, make the ratio anything we pleased,—15 to 1, or 16 to 1, or 20 to 1. Some preferred 15 to 1 because this was the ratio fixed by the Almighty when placing the two metals in the ground. Others did not think any ratio was necessary because gold ought not to be retained in circulation in a country of poor or plain people. Silver ought to do all the work of money. If it was too heavy, as some said, for daily use, let it be stored and have paper issued against it. Paper money, by the by, could be issued "against" anything. It did not need to be exchangeable for a thing provided it were "based" on it, that is, if the issuer of the paper owned something of value which he had in his mind when he issued it. Therefore, silver did not need to be mined or coined in order to "base" paper on it. We need only, one member of Congress said, have our engineers calculate how much silver there was in a mountain, and we could then "base" paper on it to that amount. Silver, too, was gradually personified into something almost human. It was entitled to "a place of honor." It was the friend of the poor, and stayed with people in times of misfortune when gold fled to the rich, or to foreign countries. You could be ungrateful, or indifferent, to silver as to a human friend. Very recently, a member of Congress reproached a newspaper in this city with "never having said a kind word of silver." Silver came to have a "cause" of its own, to be degraded or betrayed. It had triumphs to achieve and defeats to sustain. You could insult silver, or slight it, or slander it, or humiliate it, or snub it. I do not believe that it would be easy to find, in the discussions of the past ten years, the smallest recognition, on the silver side, that money is, or ought to be, a measure of value simply. It has been treated throughout as a commodity which it was the duty of the Government to make as plentiful as possible, and put within easy reach of as large a number of people as possible. On this view of the duty of the Government, what we call the silver party, which is now in the field, has been founded.

Now, the founding, in a country of universal suffrage, of a party which looks on money not as a measure of value but as a commodity, is a new thing and a serious one. The aberrations of the human mind on the subject of currency have, as I have already said, been many since the dawn of history, but I do not recall any aberration in which the pretence, at least, of regarding money as a standard by which to regulate the exchange of commodities, was not kept up. This pretence often covered fraudulent alterations of the standard, but it was never laid aside, and the alterations were concealed. The adulterators and debasers never said, "Never mind about the purchasing power of this; the more there is of it the better for you." They always said, "This is just the same as what you have got already, and will purchase you just the same amount of anything you desire." Moreover, like most other functions of government in times past, the regulation of the currency was always left in the hands of a few experts, that is, of men who made the currency a matter of scientific observation, and who sought, according to their lights, to make money a measure, as well as a medium, of exchange. For the currency question is not altogether, as many suppose, a question of material or of quantity. It is, essentially or mainly, a question of psychology. What they study, who study it aright, is the way the human mind plays around exchange. The merits or demerits of gold or silver or paper as money are to be found not in the things themselves, but in the way in which the people who use them look at them. Take Gresham's Law for instance. It says that, when there are two kinds of currency,—one inferior in value to the other, but both legal tender,—the more valuable one will leave the country. Well the more valuable one does not walk off of its own accord; it is sent away by men who see profit in exporting it. The objection to silver—the great overwhelming one—is that the men who make most use of coin prefer gold. And what all statesmen or economists who make a specialty of currency try to get at, through tables of prices, and movements of bullion, is how people feel about the different kind of medium in which they make their purchases and pay their debts.

The transfer to the newspaper, the caucus, the convention, and the popular vote, of this extremely delicate task of deciding what kind of money in any given country makes the best measure of value, while furnishing the most convenient medium of exchange, is, as I have said, something new.

The problem before the country now is almost as much how to take the measure of value out of politics, as how to get at the right measure just now. For there will be little use in establishing the gold standard or any other standard, unless politicians can be induced to let it alone, and leave it in the hands of men who will change it only to secure greater steadiness, and not to help debtors or to stimulate a particular branch of industry. Until it is well established that the currency will not come up as a question to be settled by the popular vote at every Presidential election, there cannot be any industrial or commercial peace or tranquillity. The questions of ratio or no ratio, of one metal or another, of government paper or bank paper, of elasticity or fixity,—have all to be considered with reference to the effect on the standard of value, and this class of problem is no more capable of being settled at the polls than are parallels of latitude or of longitude. The debating of it on the stump, except to prevent the commission of some great folly, or to procure their transfer to experts, is a patent absurdity. The one thing which the popular vote can safely do for the currency, is to direct its committal to a few men who are familiar with it, both from the theoretical and the practical side. This, too, is the main object of the championship of the gold standard which we now witness. What the "gold bugs" really demand is not the gold standard, so much as assimilation in currency matters to the other great commercial nations, and the absolute abandonment of the currency question as a political issue. That we shall secure these things at one election is not likely, but the election of a President on a sound-money platform will be the first step toward it, and a great one.

The currency problem is made all the more complicated by the attitude of the West toward the East. That there is a line dividing the two regions has been for a long time vaguely perceived, but it was never so clearly defined as by the war feeling and by the silver question. Speaking generally, the bulk of whatever there was of pugnacity toward England after Mr. Cleveland's message was to be found west of the Alleghanies; and, speaking generally, also, it may be said that the principal support of the silver standard is to be found west of the Alleghanies. It is accompanied in both cases by a dislike or distrust of the East, which is partly social and partly financial, and covers also European countries, but principally England. The social dislike or distrust would need an article to itself. The financial one is, in the main, that of a borrowing for a creditor community, and that of a new agricultural community for one which is devoted mainly to the business of selling commodities and exchanging money. It is composed, in part, of the old dislike of the farmer for the financier, and in part, that of the poor debtor for the rich creditor. Behind it all lies great ignorance about foreigners and foreign relations, and of the other forms of society than those by which western men are surrounded, combined with an immense sense of power. It is difficult to make a western man understand that a country of 70,000,000 of inhabitants cannot do anything that it has a fancy to do, including the circulation of silver at a fixed ratio. It is also difficult to persuade him that a well-dressed man with superfine manners, does not cherish evil designs of some sort. He does not see how the great fortunes he hears of in the East have been honestly acquired, and he, therefore, would hear with equanimity of the bombardment of eastern cities. He brooks very ill the unconscious assumption of superiority which the long cultivation of the social art brings with it in older countries, and thinks it the main business of the American abroad to resent this by threats and defiance.

Among the mass of western people, a knowledge of the conditions of foreign exchange is scanty. The notion that a nation with $1,600,000,000 of foreign commerce can be a law unto itself in commercial matters, and that it is easy to create financial conditions which will cut us off from the rest of the world, is still rife in that part of the country. In fact, it would not be too much to say that, in spite of a high degree of culture at certain points, the West is suffering all the observed consequences of too great isolation,—that is, want of more contact with other social conditions and other forms of civilization. All genuine and steady progress thus far has come from intercourse with foreigners and familiarity with their point of view, and readiness to adopt whatever is best and most suitable in their ideas, manners, or customs. This has been true from the earliest times, is, in fact, the most familiar phenomenon of advancing civilization. The greatest danger the Valley of the Mississippi runs to-day, is the danger of living in its own ideas,—the belief that Providence still creates peculiar peoples.

Escape from the silver idea is not likely to be easy. The protective idea is incorporated with it. The belief that silver is a commodity, not simply a measure of value, has taken possession of the western mind. The notion that it is, therefore, as much entitled to protection as any other commodity, by any means within reach of the Government, is not easily dislodged, so long as the protective theory prevails at the East. It is not easy for an eastern protectionist to face the arguments by which a western man refuses to help the East to support its industries by heavy duties so long as the West, and more especially the mining States, have no share in the blessings derived from the national policy. The western man is a protectionist, too, but he wishes to push the plan farther, and he has concocted a theory of currency to go along with it. A self-supporting Europe-defying country, producing everything it wants for its own use, including its own money, is his idea of a state. The eastern man goes only half way. He wishes to be independent of Europe industrially, but to keep up his connection with it pecuniarily, which is not thorough and complete "Americanism."

That these ideas will be overcome, except by actual experiment, seems unlikely. If the currency should, by the next election, fall into the hands of a Government dominated by the ideas of the silverites, we must be prepared for deliverance through a panic of very great magnitude. This is the way, as a general rule, the financial heresies of a democracy are dissipated. Books are not read, or theorists much listened to. The thing has to be tried. Nevertheless discussion has produced a great deal of effect in the great cities where commercial considerations tell, and the chances are that, if the sound-money men shall get hold of the Government in 1897, the cult of silver will gradually retreat, like paganism in the early ages, to remote country districts, and linger rather as a superstition than as a financial theory. Several things are working against it, and the most powerful is the great increase in the production of gold; but its greatest support, that which will probably last longest, is patriotic belief in the power of the nation to do what it pleases.

Much the same things are true, *mutatis mutandis*, of the tariff question. I am quite aware that there is a great deal to be said for a tariff that shall fairly protect native industries from foreign competition. The theory of protection has been defended by many able men, and is held by many honest ones. But the protective tariff, as enacted by legislation either in this or in any other democratic country, is never the protective tariff which publicists or economists work out in their libraries. The latter takes a general view of the whole field of industry, and endeavors to impose duties with such impartiality that no one industry shall profit at the expense of another, or interfere with another's freedom of action. Moreover it insists above all things on permanence, or, at all events, on sufficient permanence to enable the legislator to see the result of his own experiments, as regards the amount and the incidence of his duties. This is the sort of tariff which protectionists write books about, and lecture about land land on the stump.

The actual tariff of legislation is a totally different affair. It is made up not so much on a general view of the needs of all industries, as on the account each industry gives of the amount of duty it needs to make it profitable. It favors, too, those which are able to make the largest contributions to electioneering expenses of the party which enacts it, without regard to the general effect. Permanence is the last thing it thinks of. Our tariff has undergone twenty-five changes since the war, all in the direction of higher duties. All but one of these changes were made on the demand of manufacturers, who claimed more assistance, and got it without any inquiry into the reason why they needed it, or why they had failed to make sufficient profits under the existing duties. So that the tariff of the scientific protectionists is never seen and probably never will be seen in practice, nor is it at all likely that any tariff can ever have much stability — and this for reasons which apply to all, or nearly all, governmental interferences with trade and industry.

No such interference can in modern society ever be isolated or confined to one object or class of objects. Its effects are always vastly more far-reaching than the promoter ever imagines. One of the most marked of these is to stimulate competition at home by bringing more capital into every protected industry—thus diminishing the advantages of protection to each beneficiary, while tempting people to start new industries without a special fitness for them, in reliance on protection. So that, like all stimulants, its influence diminishes as time goes on, and the cry for more duties or new duties is constant. There have been, as I have said, twenty-five changes in the tariff since 1861, and only one of them has been due to the so-called free-traders. All the others were made on the demand of dissatisfied protectionists. And yet, as any business man will tell you, nothing is more necessary to prosperous industry than stability in the conditions under which it is carried on. That is, business can flourish under either a high or low tariff, if the business man can make his calculations with certainty. But of any steady tariff there is no more promise, apparently, to-day than there was ten years ago. If the Republicans elect the President and have a majority in both Houses, they will probably pass something like the old McKinley tariff bill, and they generally suppose that this will bring in an era of prosperity; but it will not do so any more than the old McKinley tariff which led to the terrible defeat of 1890. It will be full of excesses and abuses which will bring about another reaction, and there will then be in a few years another kind of tariff with a similar result. Prosperity will wait for a settlement of the currency question.

Another objection to the protective system, perhaps in the long run the most serious of all, is its effect on public life. No contemporary observer can fail to be struck with the disappearance from Congress and the State Legislatures of men prominent for eloquence, character, or the weight of their opinions. It is no exaggeration to say that there is hardly one left in the political world who is listened to for doctrine or instruction on any great public question. There are in Congress no orators, no financiers or economists, no scholars whom people like to hear from before making up their minds—no Clays, no Websters, no Calhouns, no Wrights, no Marcys, no Everetts, no Sewards, no Lincolns, no Fessendens, no Trumbulls, no Sumners, no "illustrations," as the French call them, in any field. The talent of the country in fact seems to have taken refuge in the great business corporations, and in the colleges, just as in the Middle Ages it took refuge in the monasteries. In the late attempts of Congress to get up a war there seemed to be no one in either House capable of drafting a resolution which would present its designs in respectable shape.

We cannot recall any case in modern times in which a government seemed so completely abandoned by the adepts and experts.

Now why is this to be ascribed to the tariff? Well, in this way: Business—the making of money by the production or sale of commodities—is the greatest interest of life to the bulk of the American community. As soon as government is presented to men as an instrument for the addition to their income of a sum in dollars and cents which they can enter in their ledgers every year, as they can profits from a speculation, they cease to think of it as an instrument for the promotion of the general welfare. Their mind gets fixed on it wholly as a means of increasing their own revenues. When a man has once entered in his accounts a good sum as the result of a piece of legislation procured by his own exertions, he is never again the same man as a citizen. He takes an entirely different view of the State, of the objects of government, of the nature of patriotism, and of the functions of the legislator. Politics becomes business to him. The duty of getting high-tariff men into Congress who will put the right duty on his commodity becomes a duty which he owes to his partners, to his creditors, to his family. The expediency of paying any sum necessary to elect such men becomes as plain as the expediency of paying the expenses of his drummers. Opponents of his tariff become to him assailants of property and order. A speech against the tariff is an instigation to communists to wreck his mill or his workshop. Free-trade books become quasi-incendiary publications. Free-trade professors and editors are corrupters of youth. All the mental influences which create orthodoxy on any subject, work for the conversion of defence against foreign industrial competition into the highest duty of a citizen.

Once fill the country with this idea, as with a religion, and the effect on politics soon becomes manifest. Men who believe in freedom of thought and expression, and who think that government has other and higher duties than seeing that the business of the private citizen is profitable, are generally the fittest men for public life. Such men are rarely good tariff men, and they are, therefore, sedulously discarded by caucuses and conventions. Bosses are hostile to them because money cannot readily be obtained to promote their election, and because they are too independent to be easily disciplined. When this process has lasted a number of years, the thoughts of the *élite* of the nation naturally turn away from politics to fields in which a man may speak the thing he wills, and be the master of his own career.

With more space at my disposal illustrations of this would be easy. There is one before us to-day, however, which cannot be passed over. That this tendency to eliminate men of ability and independence of thought from public life should end in making Major McKinley the Republican candidate for the Presidency, is what is now called "the logic of the situation." If this sifting process continued very long, it was inevitable that it would at last discard from the list of qualifications for the Chief Magistracy everything but devotion to a high tariff, and put in nomination for it a man who had nothing else to recommend him. All the Republican candidates since the foundation of the party—Lincoln, Grant, Hayes, Garfield, Blaine, Harrison—have had some solid claim for the place, apart from the tariff. Lincoln was a considerable orator and valiant opponent of slavery when he was nominated. Grant was a great soldier. Hayes was a good soldier, a sound financier, and a highly respectable local administrator. Garfield was a scholar, an orator, and a publicist of distinction. Harrison was a distinguished soldier, and had considerable eminence at the bar of his own State. Blaine was admired for a good many things which had no connection with protection for native industry. But, as the tariff becomes more prominent in the party councils, the standard of talent or achievement necessary for the place steadily declines. There was a strong note of warning on this subject in General Harrison's remark that a "cheap coat made a cheap man," and in the preposterous doctrine which many of the Republican leaders began in 1890 to preach on the stump, that dearness of commodities was a good thing for the poor. The intellectual descent made by the party at that time cleared the way for a far poorer sort of candidate than any it had ever had, nay, worse than any party had ever had since the foundation of the Government, for we are ready to allow any one who has looked into the published volume of Major McKinley's speeches, or has examined his record as Governor of Ohio, to compare him with any President, or Presidential candidate, in our history. Any such examination will show that the party has, in its search for a suitable standard-bearer, reached a region of extraordinary intellectual poverty and moral weakness, but still a region toward which it has for many years been steadily marching.

The financial situation is simply this: Partly under the influence of the silver craze, partly under the influence of a renewal of the greenback craze —which makes greenbacks a sacred relic of the war to be preserved in spite of their defects as money —we have undertaken to keep about $900,000,000 of mixed silver and government paper at par with gold. This is the most tremendous task any civilized government has ever imposed upon itself. The Bank of England only agrees to keep $80,000,000 of paper at par. The Bank of France has only $700,000,000 to look after, at the most, for this is all the paper it is allowed to issue, and keeps gold for nearly half of this. The German Bank has only to keep its paper at par in securities, bank-notes, discounted bills, and legal-tender notes of the government. But we undertake to see that everybody who wants it shall get gold for more than $400,000,000 of silver, which brings only 58 per cent. of intrinsic value in the market, and for about $500,000,000 of paper which has no intrinsic value whatever. In order to do this, we borrow gold whenever our stock of it runs short, and every successful loan is greeted as a great financial triumph.

Upon this borrowed stock of gold, too, Gresham's Law plays incessantly. I have recalled the meaning of this law in an earlier part of this article. It means for us that any one who finds it necessary to settle a balance with a foreign creditor, and who is unable to settle it with silver or paper, may settle it with gold drawn from the Treasury. So that the Government stock of gold is sure to undergo incessant diminution from these drafts.

Now the protectionist, or I may say McKinley, remedy for this is to procure larger revenue by putting higher duties on foreign imports. Granting that this would increase the revenue, the only difference would be that we could purchase our reserve of gold with our own money, instead of borrowing it. But it would not diminish the drafts on this reserve. These drafts arise out of the fact that with a dollar in silver worth only 58 cents, I can go to the Treasury and get a dollar worth 100 cents. This demand will not cease until silver becomes worth 100 cents on the dollar, or the race of money-changers dies out, or until the volume of our currency is so reduced that we shall need gold for other uses than bolstering up our silver and greenbacks. If all this be true, it is easy to see that the declarations in favor of the gold standard in the Republican platforms will profit us little, unless some means are devised to stop the drain of our gold caused by our periodical announcements that we mean to keep our silver and paper at par with gold, or perish in the attempt. So long as this continues, it matters not whether we buy the gold for our reserves, or borrow it, we shall be constantly on the edge of a silver basis, and consequently of a frightful panic.

The work of currency reform, therefore, consists in following the example of the other great nations of the earth and leaving silver to do the best it can as token-money or small change—that is, limiting its legal tender quality—and in reducing the volume of the greenbacks, or wholly redeeming them, and discharging the Government from the duty of keeping anything at par, except its own credit. But this involves the substitution, for the greenbacks and silver, of some sort of banking system whose paper shall be secure and whose circulation shall contract and expand with the wants of trade. No Legislature since 1815 has had a more serious task before it than this, and we doubt if any Legislature has ever had. It will need a Congress either of remarkable intelligence or of remarkable docility. It will need a first-rate financier to direct the operation, one who is intimately acquainted with currency problems both as affected by home trade and by foreign exchange—such a man in truth as Alexander Hamilton or Albert Gallatin.

THE REAL PROBLEMS OF DEMOCRACY

Mr. John Morley, in replying to some of Mr. Lecky's charges against the liberal movement of the last fifty years in England, expresses his regret that in his recent book, "Democracy and Liberty," Mr. Lecky has not devoted himself to a discussion of democracy in all its aspects; its effect not only on government, but on social relations of every description, on science, on art, on literature—on the whole of life, in short, as we see it in the western world to-day. He says:

"We can hardly imagine a finer or more engaging, inspiring, and elevating subject for inquiry than this wonderful outcome of that extraordinary industrial, intellectual, and moral development which has awakened in the masses of modern society the consciousness of their own strength, and the resolution, still dim and torpid, but certain to expand and to intensify, to use that strength for purposes of their own. We may rejoice in democracy or we may dread it. Whether we like it or detest it, and whether a writer chooses to look at it as a whole or to investigate some particular aspect of it, the examination ought to take us into the highest region of political thought, and it undoubtedly calls for the best qualities of philosophic statesmanship and vision."

The task suggested is not easy, and Mr. Lecky, perhaps wisely, has not attempted it. He devotes himself mainly, in the first volume, at least, to describing the objectionable tendencies of democracy, more particularly as illustrated by the history of the last half century in England and America. The second volume may be called a series of essays on the topics now most frequently discussed in democratic countries; Mr. Lecky gives the pros and cons of each without committing himself to very positive opinions on any of them. All authors who touch at all on democracy in our day recognize in it a new and potent force, destined before long to effect very serious changes in the social structure, and to alter, in many important respects, the way in which men have looked at human society since the foundation of Christianity. But they handle it very much as we handle electricity; that is to say, tentatively. They admit they are dealing with a very mysterious power, of which they know as yet but little, and on the future manifestations of which they cannot pronounce with any confidence. The great difficulty in the way of discussing it philosophically or scientifically is the one which doubtless Mr. Lecky himself has experienced—that thus far all investigators have been themselves part of the thing to be investigated. Every man, or nearly every man, who takes up a pen to examine the questions what democracy is, and what effect it is likely to have on the race, is himself either an earnest advocate or an earnest opponent of it. He sees in it either the regeneration of mankind or the ruin of our civilization. This is true of nearly every writer of eminence who has touched on it since the French Revolution. The most moderate of its enemies seldom admits more on its behalf than his own ignorance of what it promises. Its defenders are, as a rule, too enthusiastic to make their predictions of much philosophic value.

In England, the historic background has enough social gloom in it to make the glorification of democracy comparatively easy work for the faithful thus far. In America its success seems so closely connected with the success of the government itself that praise of it and prediction of its complete sufficiency, have become the part of patriotism. Doubts about its future seem doubts about the future of the nation, which no lover of his country is willing to entertain lightly. Tocqueville is the one man of eminence who in modern times has attempted for democracy what Montesquieu attempted for all government—the discovery and exposition of the principle on which it rests. His work on "Democracy in America" is so well known that it is hardly necessary to say that, treating the base of democracy as equality, he has sought to foretell what the effect of this principle would be, in the end, on manners and institutions. Some of his predictions have come true. Some are very erroneous, and the fact is that, as the years roll by and American development continues, his work becomes less valuable. It will always be interesting as what the French call an *étude*, and was the first glimpse Europe got of the effect of democratic institutions on character and manners, but it has not maintained its earlier fame. Tocqueville fell more and more, before he died, into an attitude of partisanship, and his later political essays are too deeply tinged with melancholy about the future, for an impartial investigator.

No one, since his time, has taken the subject up with more authority than Sir Henry Maine. In a book on Popular Government, published in 1886, he ventures on a broad characterization of democratic society, which bears the mark of insufficient observation. The only thing he has to rely upon in the way of experience is the Athenian democracy and that of America. There was not in the ancient world any democracy at all in the sense in which we understand the term, and the working of the system in the United States has been too short, the disturbing elements have been too numerous, and Sir Henry's acquaintance with it is all too slight, to make it possible for him to speak about it with philosophic positiveness. To crown all, he was essentially an aristocrat, an authority who, rightly or wrongly, felt his position in some sort menaced by the new régime.

Mr. Lecky suffers from the same disadvantages. He is a gentleman in the old sense of the term, who feels that his weight as such is in some sort menaced. In the new régime he expects men of his sort to count for less in some way, probably in many ways. He is fresh, too, from a revolution in his own country, much more searching and deep-seated than revolutions used to be—one of the first democratic revolutions, in short, that we have had since that of France, one hundred years ago. The recent Irish land laws are the dethronement of a great class, the apparent sacrifice of the few to the many, on a large scale; this is what democracy calls for, but it is never accomplished without seemingly serious violations of natural justice. Mr. Lecky took a prominent part in opposing these recent changes in Ireland. Whether they are bad or good, no man could share either in defending or in advocating them without considerable damage to his judicial-mindedness, to his philosophic insight, so to speak. He cannot approach them as a Cavour or a Beaumont. He is part of the revolution. He cannot wholly like them, and he cannot help ascribing them in some way to the great movement which, for better or worse, is plainly upturning the world, putting down the mighty and exalting the humble. If, therefore, one were disposed to be ill-natured, one might call Mr. Lecky's book an attempt to pay democracy off for suggesting or assisting the Irish land laws and home-rule movement. It is essentially an address to the opponents of democracy, written with his usual narrating ability and fulness of reading; but, for the reasons I have stated, it cannot do much to convince those who are not fellow-sufferers and do not share his prejudices. In short, it is not the book on democracy of which the world is just now in need and in search.

The chief objection to it, and to most recent writings of the same sort, is that, while nominally discussing democracy, it really only points out the apparently bad tendencies of democracy. It does not treat democracy as a whole. It errs in this respect somewhat as Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution do. One could not get from

Burke any idea of the objections to the *ancien régime*. The Revolution seems, according to him, the work of mocking devils who could give no reason for their mischief. That anybody in France had anything serious to complain of, anything which could not be removed by means of a little patience and good will, anything which was likely to have an educating influence, which was likely to mould character and breed defects, does not appear. The whole outbreak seems gratuitous, uncaused, and therefore against the order of nature. Mr. Lecky singles out and makes prominent nearly everything that can be said against democracy, by means of partial comparison—the least fair of all methods of judging either a society or a régime, and yet it is the commonest method of travellers and essayists. For my part, I never read a description of the evils of democracy at the present day without inquiring with what state of society or with what kind of government the writer compares it. When and where was the polity from observation of which he has formed his standard? When and where was the state of things, the "good estate," from which we have declined or are declining? This is extremely important, for all we know or can say about government must be the result of actual observation. "Ideal government," as it is called, such as is described in Plato's "Republic," or More's "Utopia," or Bellamy's "Looking Backward," is interesting to read about, as the play of an individual mind, but no one considers any of these books very helpful to those who are actually contending with the problems of to-day.

To enable any reformer to make his impress on the age in which he lives, or to win any considerable number of his countrymen over to his way of thinking, the state of things he seeks to bring about must commend itself to his contemporaries as capable of realization. He must have some model in his mind's eye, not too far removed, either in time or in distance, from the popular imagination. This is an essential condition of the advance of all great multitudes. Every man's standard of civilization is drawn from what he has seen, or thinks he may readily reach. Nearly all differences touching governments, between various peoples or between various classes of the same society, came from differences of standards. Some are extremely content with a state of things that others think impossible. An Indian, for instance, cannot understand the white man's eagerness to get him to give up the tepee, in which he has been so happy, for the log cabin or the frame house. The spoils politician is puzzled by the Mugwump's passion for competitive examinations, and government based on party distribution of the offices as spoils seems to him most natural and thoroughly successful. Probably few or no Tammany men can to this day quite understand the objection of reformers to their style of government. They see that tens of thousands apparently like it and are satisfied with it. What is the need of a change? The cause of all the discussion is that the Mugwump has a different standard of government from the politician, and is not satisfied until the government he lives under comes up to it. In like manner, when a monarchist or conservative begins to complain to a democrat of the defects of his system and of the gloominess of its prospects, in order to produce any effect he must point out from what period or from what system there has been a falling away. When and where were things any better, taken as a whole? And how much better were they? This is a question which every writer on democracy is bound to answer at the outset.

I have said "taken as a whole," because the fatal defect of all attacks on democracy of recent years, like Mr. Lecky's, is this defect of partial comparison. When we undertake to compare one régime with another, old with new times, it does not do to fasten on one feature of either. In our day this is sure to be ineffective. If we judge American society, for instance, solely from the point of view of legislative purity and ability, it will certainly suffer in comparison with that of Great Britain. If we judge it from the point of view of judicial learning and independence, we shall probably reach the same conclusion. It would be quite easy to point out certain losses which it sustains from the absence of an aristocracy, as contrasted with any European country. If, too, we undertake, as Mr. Lecky does, to compare the England or Ireland of to-day with the England or Ireland of some bygone period, known or unknown, it does not do to say that at that period Parliament was better, or county government was better, or legislation was more deliberate and impartial, or other statesmen were better than Mr. Gladstone. To produce any real effect the comparison has to be complete. You have to compare the general happiness from all causes. You have to treat the two contrasted communities as places for the poor and friendless man, or for the industrious, enterprising, and thrifty man, to live in, as well as for the wealthy and cultivated man. Otherwise you make no headway. Every reader will think instantly of the things you have overlooked. You cannot compare the England of to-day with the England of 1800 or 1867 without destroying or greatly weakening your case. There is not a poor man in England who is not conscious that he is vastly better off, as regards all the things furnished him under the name of "government," than his grandfather was. The same thing is ludicrously true of Ireland. A proposal submitted to the people in either country to go back fifty or one hundred years, would be rejected almost unanimously with derision. You might give them fifty reasons for thinking them mistaken, but not one of them would produce any impression. Why is this? An adequate book on democracy would answer the question. It would not only give these reasons, but state fully and fairly why they were certain to be disregarded.

The truth is that democracy is simply an experiment in the application of the principle of equality to the management of the common affairs of the community. It is the principle of equality which has conquered the world. That one man is as good as another is an outgrowth of what may be called social consciousness, and as soon as it has got possession of the State, democratic government follows as a matter of course. The theory of the social contract is an offspring of it. This theory made no impression on the masses when Locke preached it. It did not reach the people till Rousseau took it up, in the middle of the last century. Since then it has made great strides. Rulers have become the mere hired servants of the mass of the community, and criticism of them has come naturally with the employment of them as agents. The notion that all men are alike, and are entitled to an equal voice in the management of the common affairs, is democracy. It is the effort of all to assert this, and to see how the thing can be done, which forms the democratic experiment that is being tried in so many countries.

Many things have occurred which seem to warrant the belief that it will not succeed. What constitutes the success of a government? The very first answer to this question is that we cannot tell whether a government is successful or not without seeing how long it lasts. The first duty of a government is to last. A government, however good, which does not last is a failure. The Athenian republic, the Roman republic and empire, the Venetian republic, the French monarchy, the English monarchy, and the American republic, have all to be tried by this test. To say that a government is a very good government, but that it was overthrown or changed in a few years, is almost a contradiction in terms. All we know of any value about any government is derived from observation of its working. It must be confessed, therefore, that nearly all that we read in our day about democracy is pure speculation. No democracy has lasted long enough to enable one to write a treatise on it of much value. Almost everything that Mr. Lecky says of the working of democracy in America, or that he has got from Mr. Bryce, though all true, fails to throw much light upon the future.

The men who first began to write on democracy, toward the close of the last century and the beginning of this, had really a very small notion of its working on the scale which the modern world witnesses. Their only opportunities of observation lay in the history of the small Greek communities, of early Rome, of Venice and the minor Swiss cantons, and of the early New England States. They had not for a moment pictured to themselves the government by universal suffrage of communities numbering tens of millions. Their democracies all met in the forum or market-place; their leading men were known to every citizen. Nothing seemed easier than to fill the public offices by a mere show of hands. Every man was supposed to be intensely occupied with public affairs, to be eager to vote on them, and to be quite able to vote intelligently. The work of management had not a prominent place in any former democratic scheme. The "demagogue"—that is, the man who leads people astray by specious schemes, by hostility to the rich, or eagerness for war, or profuse prodigality, or winning eloquence—was well known. But the man who does not speak, who makes no public impression, who is not rich or eloquent or in any manner distinguished, yet who leads the voters and holds legislation in the hollow of his hand, had still to make his appearance.

In the new, unforeseen, enormous democracy, 40,000,000 to 100,000,000 in England, or France, or America, he is indispensable. In these large democracies, the work of bringing the popular will to bear in filling the offices of the government, or in performing any act of government, is one of great difficulty, which needs almost constant attention from a large army of "workers." To influence, persuade, or inform this immense body of persons is no easy matter, as two antagonistic forces are always engaged in pulling it in different directions. The diffusion among it of any one view of anything would be a serious task. To insure the triumph of either view is still more serious. Then, a very large proportion of the voters are not interested in public questions at all, or their feeble interest has to be aroused and kept awake. Another large proportion do not desire to give themselves the trouble to vote. They have to be, in some manner, induced to go to the polls, or have to be prepared to go by numerous visits. The business of what is called the "canvass" in modern democracy is, in fact, something unlooked for and unprovided for by theoretical democrats. It has produced a profession whose sole occupation is to get people to vote in a particular way. As the mass of voters increases, this profession, of course, becomes larger and more important. In my own opinion, its importance constitutes the strongest argument against woman suffrage. The doubling of the number of votes to be influenced or managed in any community is a very grave consideration; for not only have you to find such workers, with the certainty that their character will not be very high, but you have to pay them, and no provision for their payment has ever been made in any scheme of democratic government. The duty of remunerating them is thrown on the victorious parties at elections; in America, for a long time, this duty was discharged by distributing among them the smaller offices. There has been an escape from it here by what is called civil service reform, or, in other words, by competitive examination. In England, the aristocracy, finding the government patronage passing out of their hands, judiciously introduced the merit system, in time to save it from the incoming democracy, but in France and Italy the tendency is still in the direction of "spoils." The passion for government places is strong, and the difficulty of getting anything done for the State, except in return for a place, grows apace, on the whole. If I said that the reluctance of a democracy to vote at all, or to vote right, was not foreseen by the early democratic advocates, and that they made no provision for it in their system, I should not be very far wrong. This was the greatest mistake of the theoretic democrats. They never foresaw the big democracies. The working of democracy in America is something of which they had no conception. They did not anticipate the necessity of organizing and directing the suffrage, nor of the intervention of the boss and his assistants.

When you come to examine this mistake, you find it consists really in the absence of provision for the selection of candidates by the multitude, or, in other words, in the absence of a nominating system. None of the books contain any direction for the performance of this work of nominating by a large democracy. The founders of the United States had apparently never thought of it. In their day, a few leading men met and chose one of their own number as a good person to fill, say, a legislative or other important place; or a prominent man proposed himself to his fellow-citizens to fill it. For some time after the foundation of the government, a committee of Congress named candidates for the presidency. But it was soon seen that this would not do. The voters would not allow any one to do this work for them. An elected assembly had to do it, and the nominating convention, in its various stages, was started. In other words, the business of electing officers was doubled by having another election to elect the people who were to select good people to elect. This work of nominating has added to the boss's, or manager's, power by adding to his duties. He has to see not only that people vote for the various candidates, but that they vote for those who have to choose them. More complication, more patience, more watchfulness, more dexterity.

Under this régime, the nominating system, of which no theoretical writer had the least idea, has grown into a piece of machinery more complicated than the government itself. The man who manages it, who says who must compose the body which selects the candidates—that is, who designates the delegates to the nominating convention—is really the most powerful man in the community. Every one who wishes to enter public life bows before him. No one who, being in public life, wishes to rise higher, no Representative who wishes to be Senator, no Governor who wishes to be President, will gainsay him or quarrel with him. Everybody but the President in a second term is at his beck. For similar reasons, he holds the legislators in his power. If they do not legislate as he pleases, he will not allow them to come back to the legislature. He has to be consulted, in fact, about every office. He may be boss of a district, a city, or a state. The larger his dominion and the denser its population, the more powerful he is. The people, being busy, are not willing to go to the trouble of voting at two elections. As a rule, they do not vote at all for the nominating convention. This is, therefore, almost completely in the boss's hands. As he decides who shall compose it, he also decides what it shall do. In fact, in ordinary times and in the absence of great public excitement, he is the great man of a democratic community; and yet neither he nor the nominating system which has made him what he is, was foreseen by any early political thinker. There was no foreshadowing of the difficulty that democracy would experience in filling office, and no one has as yet devised any good plan for the purpose. Any person who to-day described the government, say, of New York, or Pennsylvania, or any other large American State, out of the books, would give no real idea of it. He would miss the real source of power, and the way in which it was infused into the machinery. If there be anything seriously wrong with democracy in America to-day, it lies in the nominating system, yet this attracts comparatively little attention.

Another new phenomenon which has greatly affected the development of democratic government, and has received no attention, is the growth of corporations. These aggregations of capital in a few hands have created a new power in the State, whose influence on government has been very grave. They employ a vast number of voters, over whom their influence is paramount; a single railroad company has in its service thousands of men. They own immense sums of money, which they think it but right to use freely for their own protection. In some States, men make a livelihood in the legislature by "striking" them, — that is, threatening them with hostile legislation, and getting themselves bought off by the agent of the corporation; for each corporation is apt to keep an agent at the seat of government to meet these very demands, and makes no secret of it. Latterly the bosses have taken charge of this business themselves. They receive the money, and see that the legislature is properly managed in return. The companies have, in fact, created a code of morality to meet this exigency. The officers say that they are the custodians of large amounts of other people's property, which they are bound to defend, by whomsoever attacked. That wrong does exist in the State is not their affair. The reform of the legislature or of the State is not their affair. It is their business to keep safely what has been placed in their charge. Indeed, the levying of blackmail on companies, either as a contribution to campaign expenses or as fees to pay for protection, is now one of the principal sources of a boss's revenue, and, in States like New York, goes a good way toward enabling him to defy hostile sentiment. It furnishes him with funds for subsidizing the legislature and the press. How to bring these corporations under the law, and at the same time protect them from unjust attacks, is one of the most serious problems of democratic government. But it can hardly be said to have received any discussion as yet. Corporations are as powerful as individual noblemen or aristocrats were in England in the last century, or in France before the Revolution, but are far harder to get at or to bring to justice, from their habit of making terms with their enemies instead of fighting them.

This brings me naturally to two other serious and significant changes which have occurred within fifty years in democratic societies. I mean the decline of the legislatures, and the transfer of power, or rather of the work of government, from the rich to the poor.

That this decline of the legislatures is not a mere decline in manners seems to me undeniable. It is a decline in the quality of the members in general respect, in education, in social position, in morality, in public spirit, in care and deliberation, and, I think I must add, in integrity, also. Legislation is more hasty and more voluminous, is drafted with less care, and enacted with less deliberation and with much greater indifference to public opinion, particularly to instructed and thoughtful public opinion. This is said to be true of France and Italy, and in some degree of England, but it is especially true of America. Congress and the State legislatures are not what they were forty years ago. Both the Senate and the House contain fewer men of prominence and ability. The members are more slenderly instructed, but much more eagerly interested, in questions of political economy, finance, and taxation than they used to be, and more disposed to turn to account what they conceive to be their knowledge. They are more difficult to lead, and yet are more under the domination of their own cliques or sets. In the State legislatures, the boss is far more powerful than he was. But little legislation originates with the members themselves. It is generally concocted outside and passed under orders. Few of the members are really chosen and elected by the people. They are suggested and returned by the boss of the State or district. They feel accountable to him, and not to the public. The old machinery of agitation, the public meeting and the press, produces little effect on them. Their motives are rarely made known. Many of their acts, if not corrupt, are open to the suspicion of corruption; some of them are bold attempts to extort money. All this is true, as I have said, in some degree or other, of all the countries in which democratic institutions have taken or begun to take root. These bodies have not answered the earlier expectations of democratic philosophers. The men who were expected to go to them do not go to them. The men who have served the public well in them do not return to the service. The influence on them of the intellectual, cultivated, or instructed world is small.

To account for this, or to say how it is to be mended, is, I admit, very difficult. Few subjects have done more to baffle reformers and investigators. It is the great puzzle of the heartiest friends of democracy. The matter is growing more serious in America as society is becoming richer and more complicated. As commerce increases, credit expands and interests multiply, of course the machinery of government increases in delicacy. Derangement becomes easier, repair more difficult. The effect, for instance, of instability in taxation, or of adventures in foreign policy, upon foreign trade, or upon investment and the movements of capital, is very great; so that already merchants, bankers, and dealers in money are beginning to ask themselves whether it will be long possible to carry on the financial affairs of a great nation under a government so unskilful, and possessed of so little knowledge of the machinery of credit, as democratic governments generally are. This gives great importance to the question, What prospect is there of any change for the better? What sign is there of anything of the kind? As to this I confess I think the dependence of the optimist, if he descends to argument at all, must be on the general progress of the race in self-restraint, in love of order, and in a better knowledge, through experience, of the conditions of successful government. Any such process must necessarily be slow, and no results can be looked for until after the trial and failure of many experiments.

In other words, I do not look for the improvement of democratic legislatures in quality within any moderate period. What I believe democratic societies will do, in order to improve their government and make better provision for the protection of property and the preservation of order, is to restrict the power of these assemblies and shorten their sittings, and to use the referendum more freely for the production of really important laws. I have very little doubt that, before many years elapse, the American people will get their government more largely from constitutional conventions, and will confine the legislatures within very narrow limits and make them meet at rare intervals. The tendencies all over the Union are in this direction, and Switzerland, the most democratic country in Europe, is showing the way distinctly toward less law-making and more frequent consultation of the people at large. I believe, for instance, that after a very few years' experience of the transfer of the currency question, which has now begun, to the management of popular suffrage, the legal tender quality of money, which is now behind the whole trouble, will be abolished, and the duty of the government will be confined simply to weighing and stamping. The usefulness of the legal tender now is ludicrously disproportioned to the noise made about it. Except as a rule for fixing the denomination in which debtors must pay their debts in the absence of an agreement—which rarely causes any dispute—and for enabling debtors to cheat their creditors by paper money or the adulteration of coin—which is not infrequent—it is difficult to see what good purpose legal tender serves. It is almost certain that the day will come when it will be seen that no democratic government is fit to be entrusted with the power of giving any substance legal tender quality, and that the very best solution of the money problem is to be found in letting people make their own bargains—a solution which will be hastened by the increasing tendency to settle contracts, make purchases, and pay debts by check or draft.

The other corrective of which I see signs, though of less importance, is the increasing ability or willingness of business men to separate their business from their politics, and to refuse any longer to put money into the hands of party agents to do as they please with it. This use of money, especially since the growth of the tariff question in importance, has been one of the great sources of the degradation of American politics, because it supports the excesses or abuses of the nominating system by strengthening the hands of the boss; for it is he who generally receives the funds. But it would be absurd to build great hopes of progress on the mere cessation of an abuse. It is a thing to be noted rather than dwelt on. All that we can say with certainty is that no Western society is likely, in modern times, to let itself run completely down, as the ancient societies often did, without vigorous attempts at recovery and improvement. The general belief in progress which now prevails, the greatly increased desire to extract comfort out of life (and comfort includes quiet and order), the more scientific spirit of the time, the disposition of all classes to assume social responsibility, and the sense of what the

French call "solidarity" diffused by the press, assure us that every means of progress will be tried, that no defect will be submitted to indefinitely; but what means of improvement will be most effective, and what safeguards will be found most reliable, he would be a rash man who would venture to predict in detail.

As to the transfer of the government to the poor, it should be remembered that, except during very short periods in ancient democracies, the world has been governed by rich men; that is, by the great landholders or the great merchants. This is true of all the ancient republics and of all the modern monarchies. The unfitness of poor men for the important offices of legislation and administration has been generally acted on in the modern world, as a State doctrine. Every government has been a rich man's government. It is only in some of the smaller Swiss cantons that departures from this rule have been made. But, as a rule, in democratic societies in our day, government has been transferred to poor men. These poor men find themselves in possession of very great power over rich communities. Through the taxing power rich corporations and rich individuals are at their mercy. They are not restrained by tradition; they are often stimulated by envy or other anti-social passions. If it were not for the restrictions imposed in American States by the Constitution, the lives of rich men and of companies would be full of difficulty. There has grown up around this change the foreshadowing of a code of morality in which men's right to be rich is called in question, and the spoliation of them, if done under forms of law, is not an offense against morality. This, again, is counterbalanced or neutralized by the general popular tendency to make the accumulation of wealth the one sign of worldly success, and to estimate men by the size of their income, from whatever source derived. There is probably in America to-day a nearer approach to a literal rendering of the English term "worth," as measuring a man's possessions, than ever occurred elsewhere; that is, the term is more fully descriptive of the fact than it has ever been. Inevitably, there has appeared side by side with this a certain distrust of the opinions of persons who have not made money, which has naturally had an injurious effect on the government, and has, along with several other causes, contributed to the exclusion of the learned or professional class from the work of administration. A faithful description of the position of the wealthy class in America to-day would probably say that the accumulation of wealth by a man's own exertion is admired by the public, and greatly respected if he gives it fully to public objects, but that his attempt to participate in the work of government is viewed with a certain jealousy, while contributions for party purposes are eagerly received by the bosses, and offices are occasionally given in return for them by regular bargain. It is in this way, in fact, as well as through lower forms of corruption, that individual wealth protects itself against the consequences of the change to which I have already called attention, the transfer of the government to the poor and obscure. Property still has weight in public affairs, but not open weight, and the power of persuading the legislators has been taken from the public orator, or writer, who wielded it in the beginning of the century, and turned over to the successful man of affairs, who has schemes to carry out, but cannot waste time in arguing about them with anybody.

Among the minor illustrations of the failure to foresee, afforded by the early founders of democracy and speculators on it, is the virtual abolition of the board of electors who were to elect the President. They are now a mere formal body of registrars, who have no more to do with the results than a voting machine. Another is the total loss of the power of choice by the legislatures in electing Senators of the United States. The legislatures no longer choose them. They are chosen by the managers of the party outside, and the legislators are, in fact, elected to carry out this choice. A more complete disappointment than these two modes of bringing great care to bear on two important operations of government could hardly be imagined, and yet it is a disappointment which does not appear to have been suspected as likely to come. The present generation of reformers are nearly as eager to abolish the Electoral College and the legislative election of Senators, after a century of experience, as the framers of the Constitution were to establish them. The prevailing desire is to remit the work in both cases to the popular vote.

This brings to our notice two tendencies, apparently, but only apparently, opposing, in American opinion. One is to throw as much of the nominating or canvassing or preparatory work as possible on individual men, like bosses and workers; the other is to make the constituency of each important office as wide as possible. The whole people of the Union would like to vote directly for the President, the whole people of a State would like to vote for a Senator, and the whole people of a city would like to vote for an almost despotic mayor, but few want to take any trouble in creating or arranging machinery for choosing them. The work of "getting delegates" to nominating conventions, and making other preparations for elections, is left to professionals; that is, to men who do little else, and who get a living out of this work. The exhortation of political moralists to "attend the primaries" has become almost a joke among the class to whom it is mainly addressed.

The discussion of all these matters—that is, the observation of the working of democracy on a large scale during the past century—should be the work of any writer on democracy from the philosophic point of view in our day. Mr. Bryce's book is mainly descriptive. He does not foreshadow consequences or suggest remedies. Mr. Lecky is, to a certain extent, right in drawing illustrations from him, but we can read Mr. Bryce as well as Mr. Lecky can, and we know better than he what corrections or allowances to make. There are tens of thousands of Americans more troubled by many American phenomena than any European observer, and far more intelligently; yet it is difficult for any American to deal with them adequately as yet, for obvious reasons.

In the first place, political speculation is somewhat discountenanced or discouraged in America by the excessive cultivation of what is called "patriotism," not unnatural in a young people, whose growth in wealth and numbers has been prodigious beyond example. This "patriotism" has been made by the multitude to consist in holding everything that is, to be exactly right, or easily remedied. A complaining or critical man, as a speculator is apt to be, is therefore set down as a person "unpatriotic," or hostile to his country. He may object to the other party, but he must not find fault with the workings of his government. The consequence is that any man who expects to make his way in politics, or even to succeed comfortably in a profession or business, is strongly tempted to proclaim incessantly his great content with the existing order of things, and to treat everything "American" as sacred. Criticism of the government or of political tendencies is apt to be considered a sign of infidelity to the republic, and admiration for something foreign. More than this, an American is himself part of what he discusses or proposes to amend. He has his prejudices, some of them hereditary; he has tastes and associations, few of which are corrected by contact with or knowledge of different forms of society; and his range of possibilities is therefore narrow.

What is most serious of all is that we have not, as England or France or Germany has, one great capital, in which all the philosophers and speculators, and in fact men of education, live and make a philosophical or political atmosphere, are influenced by each other's opinions, enjoy each other's society, profit by each other's criticism, and transmit to the provinces, as from a court of last resort, final judgments on literature, art, and politics, and snap their fingers at country denunciation and grumbling. Our thinkers are scattered all over the country, hundreds or thousands of miles away from their congeners. They brood rather than speculate. They live among "plain people." They have a human desire to be comfortable and happy with their neighbors, to receive their approval and respect. They have but few opportunities of intercourse with their fellows in other parts of the country. Even in cases like the Venezuelan affair, or like the greenback or silver "craze," it is so easy to fall in with the crowd, or still easier to be silent, so hard to be generally denounced as "unpatriotic" or as a "Mugwump," or to be accused of foreign tastes or leanings, that attempts to point out a "more excellent way" are somewhat under a cloud. Only men of marked ability or strong character make them, and even for these the work is wearisome and a little disheartening. In short, the influence of the scholarly, thinking, philosophical class is not felt in American progress nearly as much as it ought to be.

This is the more regrettable because no rational observer can suppose that the government of the

United States is destined to retain indefinitely its present form. It is sure, like all governments which have preceded it, to change, and probably change from century to century. The history of all republics and of all monarchies, like the history of man himself, is one of incessant change. The Greek republics, the Roman republic and empire, the Venetian republic, the French and English monarchies, have all undergone modifications from generation to generation, in institution, laws, and manners. Since Elizabeth the English monarchy has experienced at least four enormous changes, involving complete transfer of power and a complete revolution in political ideas. Even China is succumbing to what is called "the spirit of the age." To suppose that we, with forty-five republics, indulging in annual experiments in government, shall be exempt from the general law is absurd. These changes consist, too, as a rule, in adaptation of the institutions of the country to an altered condition of popular sentiment, to the revelation of new dangers, to the decline or deterioration of some law or custom. The English in 1649 would not submit to a monarch like Charles I. In 1688 they would not submit to a monarch like James II. In 1832 they would not submit to a Parliament like that in which Pitt thundered and Burke reasoned. In other words, the history of nations is the history of incessant attempts, fortunate or unfortunate, to better themselves.

For these reasons and many others, all disquisition on the phenomena of modern democracy in any community as final, or as certain to result in despotism or in any other great calamity, appears to me exceedingly inadequate. Democracy in America, like democracy and monarchy elsewhere, is following the course of other political societies. It is suffering from unforeseen evils, as well as enjoying unforeseen blessings. It will probably be worse before it is better. It is trying a great many experiments in laws and manners, of which some, doubtless, will be hideous failures. The régime of "crazes" through which it is now passing is very discouraging, but it is engaged, like most other civilized societies, in a search after remedies.

To illustrate my meaning, let me cite the case of civil service reform. One of the unforeseen evils developed by the new democracy not long after the foundation of the government was the practice of offering all the places, high and low, in the government service, to the victors at each election as "spoils." It took fifty years to bring this evil to what I may call perfection; that is, to reveal in practice exactly how it would work, how it would affect legislation and administration and public life. It was something novel at first, because although, under European monarchies, places were given away as rewards to favorites, and were even sold, they were permanent, and the field of distribution was small. It became deeply rooted in the political manners of the people, and by large numbers was looked on as the true American system of appointment,—the only one suited to a democratic republic. Two generations, at least, had never seen any other system. A full discussion of its injurious effects on public life and on the public service was not begun till after the civil war. The advocates of a change were met at first with intense hostility and ridicule from the politicians and from members of Congress, and were received with great indifference by the general public. Yet, in five years they succeeded in making some impression upon the President. Within ten years after the war they had secured some favorable legislation. Every President since then has made further concessions to them, and this year the final transfer of the whole federal service, including 85,200 places, to the merit system has been made. I do not believe that, at the time when the agitation for civil service reform began, there was any evil or abuse in the government, an attack on which seemed so hopeless, and yet this evil has disappeared within one generation. I cite it as an illustration of the danger or error of treating any democratic failure as permanent or hopeless, or denying to any democratic society the capacity and determination to remedy its own defects in some direction or other by some means or other. No society in our time is willing to deteriorate openly, or ever does so long, without struggling for salvation.

THE EXPENDITURE OF RICH MEN

From the earliest times of which we have any historical knowledge rich men have had to exercise a good deal of ingenuity in expending their income. The old notion that wealth is desired for the sake of power was never completely true. It has always been desired also, as a rule, for the sake of display. The cases have been rare in which rich men have been content to be secretly or unobtrusively rich. They have always wished people to know they were rich. It has, also, from the earliest times, been considered appropriate that display should accompany power. A powerful man who was not wealthy and made no display, has, in all ages, been considered a strange, exceptional person. As soon as a man became powerful, the world has always thought it becoming that he should also be rich, and should furnish evidences of his riches that would impress the popular imagination. As a rule, he has sought to make this impression. He has liked people at least to see what he could do if he would. Of course, except in the case of rulers, he could not put his money into armies or fleets. Consequently, as a private man, he has put it into tangible, visible property, things which people could see and envy, or wonder over. A rich man who did not do this was always set down as a miser, or something very like it, in some way queer or eccentric. He, too, has been held bound to spend his money in ways in which the public in general expected him to spend it, and in which it had become usual for men of his kind to expend it. His expenditure was, therefore, in a certain sense, the product of the popular manners. If a man in England, for instance, expends money like a rich Turkish pacha, or Indian prince, he is frowned on or laughed at. But if he keeps a great racing-stable, or turns large tracts of land into a grouse moor or a deer forest, in which to amuse himself by killing wild animals, it is thought natural and simple.

But one of the odd things about wealth is the small impression the preachers and moralists have ever made about it. From the very earliest times its deceitfulness, its inability to produce happiness, its fertility in temptation, its want of connection with virtue and purity, have been among the commonplaces of religion and morality. Hesiod declaims against it, and exposes its bad effects on the character of its possessors, and Christ makes it exceedingly hard for the rich man to get to heaven. The folly of winning wealth or caring for it has a prominent place in mediæval theology. Since the Reformation there has not been so much declamation against it, but the rich man's position has always been held, even among Protestants, to be exceedingly perilous. His temptations might not be so great as they used to be, but his responsibilities were quadrupled. The modern philanthropic movement, in particular has laid heavy burdens on him. He is now allowed to have wealth, but the ethical writers and the clergy supervise his expenditure closely. If he does not give freely for charitable objects, or for the support of institutions of beneficence, he is severely criticised. His stewardship is insisted on. In the Middle Ages this was his own lookout. If he endowed monasteries, or bequeathed foundations for widows, or old men, or orphans, it was with the view of making provision for his own soul in the future world, and did not stand much higher in morals or religion than that old English legacy for the expenses of burning heretics. But in our times he is expected to endow for love of his kind or country, and gifts for his soul's sake would be considered an expression of selfishness.

In Europe, as I have said, the association of displays of wealth with political power has lasted since states were founded. It was largely made possible in the ancient world through slavery. From what we know through architectural remains, or historic record, there was no length, in that world, to which a great man could not go in the display of his possessions. What we hear or see of Hadrian's villa, or Diocletian's palace at Spalatro, makes Versailles seem a mere bauble. The stories told of the villas of Lucullus, or Mæcenas, even if half true, show that our modern rich men know but little of the possibilities of luxury. Pliny's description of his own villa in his Letters shows that they were far more than half true, that not one of our modern rich men has done one-quarter of what he might have done for material enjoyment. Undoubtedly the non-existence of slavery has been the greatest check on his extravagance. Could he have the same absolute control over domestic servants, he would probably treat himself to more extraordinary varieties of luxury in the matter of habitation and clothing and equipages. The traditions of the Roman Empire in this matter perished with the Empire. When the modern rich man came into possession of the means and appliances of civilization, he found himself in a new world, in which it was vastly more difficult to secure steady, uncomplaining personal service, and in which money was harder to get hold of. But what was within his reach, he readily used. The mediæval noble all over Europe after the Renaissance, transferred himself to magnificent abodes, and surrounded himself with a small army of servants. But he did this in obedience, I will not say to public opinion, for there was no such thing, but to popular notions of the fitting. It was held, as I have said, but becoming that a man who occupied his political place, who counted for so much in the state, whose descent was considered so illustrious, who owned such vast tracts of land, should live in a very great house, and be followed by a great retinue, should have his gentlemen and pages, and his numerous servants to wait upon him. When Madame de Sevigné travelled in the seventeenth century to Paris from her château in the country, she went with two carriages, seven horses, and four men on horseback, and each carriage had four horses; yet she was only a person of moderate fortune. Madame de Montespan, when she went to Vichy, had six horses in her coach; another behind with six maids. Then she had two *fourgons*, or baggage-wagons, six mules, and a dozen men on horseback, forty-five persons in all. Once when Madame de Sevigné's son came home from the army, her man of business had fifteen hundred men under arms to receive him in the court of the château. When the Marquis de Lavardin came to see her, he had officers and guards and trumpets and twenty gentlemen. The Montmorencis and Rohans and Soubises and Colignys made still greater display. The same thing went on in England. The rich men lived and travelled surrounded by splendor, because they were really great men. They had power over hundreds and thousands of fortunes, if not of lives. They had a share in the government. They were largely above the law. "God Almighty," as a pious but well-born French woman said, "thought twice before damning one of them." Down to the end of the last century the enmity of a peer, as was recently remarked, was enough to ruin a man in England.

All this is now changed in Europe. As power has left the upper classes, display has ceased. To be quiet and unobserved is the mark of distinction. Women of Madame de Sevigné's rank travel in dark-colored little broughams. Peers in England are indistinguishable when they move about in public, from any one else. Distinction is sought in manners, in speech, in general simplicity of demeanor, rather than in show of any kind. An attempt to produce on anybody, high or low, any impression but one of envy, by sumptuousness of living or equipage, would prove a total failure. It may be said, without exaggeration, that the quietness of every description is now the "note" of the higher class in all countries in Europe—quietness of manner, of voice, of dress, of equipages, of, in short, nearly everything which brings them in contact with their fellow-men. Comfort is the quest of the "old nobility" generally. Ostentation is left to the newly enriched, but there can hardly be a doubt that this is largely due to loss of power. Wealth now means nothing but wealth. The European noble was, in fact, everywhere but in Venice, a great territorial lord. It was incumbent on him as a mark of his position, as soon as he came out of his mediæval "keep," to live in a great house, if only for purposes of entertainment. His retinue required large accommodation; his guests required more, and more still was added for the needs of the popular imagination. But the system of which he was the product, which made his château or mansion grow out of the soil like his crops, was never transferred to this country. The few large grants which marked our early history never brought forth large mansions or great retinues. The great houses of that period, such as those of the Van Rensselaers or Livingstons on the Hudson, or of the planters on the James River, are simply moderate-sized mansions which, on most estates in England or France, would be considered small. Hospitality was in none of them exercised on anything like the European scale. None of them was ever occupied by anybody who exercised anything more than influence over his fellow-citizens. In fact most of them are to-day mainly interesting as showing the pains taken to put up comfortable abodes in what were then very out-of-the-way places.

All this amounts to saying that the building of great houses was, down to our own time, a really utilitarian mode of spending wealth. It was intended to maintain and support the influence of the ruling class by means which was sure to impress the popular mind, and which the popular mind called for. The great territorial owners had a recognized place in government and society, which demanded, at first a strong, and later, an extensive, dwelling-place. It was, in short, the product and indication of contemporary manners as dwelling-places generally are. If we travel through a country in which castles and fortified houses are numerous, as they used to be prior to the fourteenth century all over Europe, we conclude infallibly that the law is weak, and that neighbors make armed attacks on each other in the style described in the Paston Letters. If we find, coming down later, as in the Elizabethan period, strongholds abandoned for extensive and ornamental residences with plenty of unprotected windows, we conclude that the government is omnipotent and the great men live in peace. If we go through a democratic country like Switzerland, and find moderation in the size of houses and in the manner of living, the custom of the country, we conclude that the majority is in power, and that every man has his say in the management of the state. In short it may be truly said that dwelling-places, from the Indian's tepee up to the palace of the great noble, indicate, far more clearly than books or constitutions, the political and social condition of the country.

It is only of late years that we have had among us a class capable of equalling or outdoing the European aristocracy in wealth. American fortunes are now said to be greater than any of those of Europe, and nearly, if not quite, as numerous. But the rich American is face to face with a problem by which the European was not, and is not, troubled. He has to decide for himself, what is decided for the European by tradition, by custom, by descent, if not by responsibilities, how to spend his money. The old rich class in Europe may be said to inherit their obligations of every kind. When a man comes of age, if he inherits wealth, and is of what is called "good family," he finds settled for him the kind of house he shall live in, the number of horses and servants he shall keep, the extent to which he shall entertain. His income is, in truth, already disposed of by will, or settlement, or custom. There are certain people he is expected to maintain in a certain way, a certain style in which he is to live. This has led to, what appears to the American, the curious reluctance of the Englishman "to lay down his carriage." To certain families, houses, and properties, to certain social positions, in short, is attached the obligation of "keeping a carriage." It is one of the outward and visible signs of the owner's place in the state. To the American it is generally a mere convenience, which some years he possesses and other years he does not, and the absence of which excites no remark among his neighbors. If an Englishman of a certain rank gives it up, it indicates the occurrence of a pecuniary catastrophe. It advertises misfortune to the world. It says that he has been vanquished in a struggle, that his position is in danger, and his friends sympathise with him accordingly, partly because the women of his family do not, as with us, use public conveyances in the cities.

From all these responsibilities and suggestions the American, when he "makes his pile," is free. He can say for himself how the owner of millions in a country like this ought to live. He may have one servant, eat in the basement, sup on Sunday evenings on scalloped oysters, and sit in his shirt-sleeves on his own stoop in a one-hundred-thousand-dollar house, and nobody will make any remark. Or he may surround himself with lackeys, whom he treats as equals, and who teach him how the master of lackeys should behave, give gorgeous entertainments to other rich men like himself, at which his wife will eclipse in finery all other wives, and nobody will express interest or surprise except people who long for invitations from him. Or he may, after a period of such luxury, "burst up," sell everything out, and go live in Orange or Flushing. Or his wife may "tire of housekeeping," and they may retire to an expensive apartment in the Waldorf, or Savoy, after storing their furniture, or selling it at auction. What this indicates is simply that great wealth has not yet entered into our manners. No rules have yet been drawn to guide wealthy Americans in their manner of life. Englishmen, Frenchmen, Prussians, Austrians, Swiss, of rank and of fortune, have ways of spending their money, notions of their own of what their position and personal dignity require. But nothing of the kind is yet national in America. The result is that we constantly see wealthy Americans travelling in Europe, without the slightest idea of what they will or ought to do next, except get rid of their money as fast as possible, by the payment of monstrous prices and monstrous fees, or the committal of other acts which to Europeans are simply vulgar eccentricities, but which our countrymen try to cover up by calling them "American" when "irrational" would be a more fitting appellation. Some of this confusion of mind is due, as Matthew Arnold has suggested in one of his letters, to the absence among us of an aristocracy to set an example of behavior to our rich men. In European countries the newly enriched drop easily into the ranks of the aristocracy by a mere process of imitation. They try to dress and behave in the same way, and though a little fun may be made of them at first, they and their sons soon disappear in the crowd.

Ours do not enjoy such an advantage. They have to be, therefore, their own models, and there are finesses of manners and points of view in an aristocracy which are rarely got hold of except by long contact. By aristocracy I do not mean simply rich or well-born people, but people who have studied and long practised the social art, which is simply another name for the art of being agreeable. The notion that it consists simply in being kindly, and doing pleasant things for people, and having plenty of money, is one of the American delusions. The social art, like all other arts, is only carried to perfection, or to high excellence, by people who carefully practise it, or pay great attention to it. It consists largely in what are called "minor morals," that is, in doing things in society which long custom has settled on as suitable for the set of people with whom one associates. But it is full of what seem trifles, and which often become absurd if practised as a branch of learning acquired out of books. Like a large number of other things in civilized life, to be well practised it needs to be practised without thought, as something one is bred to. It is better obtained from books, or by study, than not at all, but it is most easily learned by observation. Ease of manner, taste in dress, tone of voice, insight into the ways of looking at small things of well-mannered people, are most easily acquired by seeing them in others. The benefit of watching adepts in this art have been enjoyed by but few rich men in America, and the result is that the rich world with us can hardly be called a social world at all. There can hardly be said to be among us what is called in Europe a "world" or "monde," in which there is a stock of common traditional manners and topics and interests, which men and women have derived from their parents, and a common mode of behavior which has assumed an air of sanctity. Our very rich people are generally simply rich people with everything in the way of social life to learn, but with a desire to learn which is kept in check by the general belief in the community that they have nothing at all to learn, and that it is enough to be rich.

That, under these circumstances, they should, in somewhat slavish imitation of Europe, choose the most conspicuous European mode of asserting social supremacy, the building of great houses, is not surprising. But in this imitation they make two radical mistakes. They want the two principal reasons for European great houses. One is that great houses are in Europe signs either of great territorial possessions, or of the practice of hospitality on a scale unknown among us. A very large house in the country in Europe indicates either that the owner is the possessor of great estates, or that he means to draw on some great capital for a large body of guests whom he will amuse by field sports out-of-doors, or who will amuse each other in-doors. These are the excuses for great houses in England, France, or Austria. The owner is a great landholder, and has in this way from time immemorial given notice of the fact. Or he is the centre of a large circle of men and women who have practised the social art, who know how to idle and have the means to idle, can talk to each other so as to entertain each other, about sport, or art, or literature, or politics, are, in short, glad to meet each other in luxurious surroundings.

No such conditions exist in America. In the first place, we have no great landholders, and there is no popular recognition of the fact that a great landowner, or great man of any sort, needs a great house. In the second place, we have no capital to draw on for a large company of men and women who will amuse each other in a social way, even from Friday to Monday. The absence of anything we can call society, that is, the union of wealth and culture in the same persons, in all the large American cities, except possibly Boston, is one of the marked and remarkable features of our time. It is, therefore, naturally what one might expect, that we rarely hear of Americans figuring in cultivated circles in England. Those who go there with social aspirations desire most to get into what is called "the Prince of Wales's set," in which their national peculiarities furnish great amusement among a class of people to whom amusement is the main thing. It would be easy enough to fill forty or fifty rooms from "Friday to Monday" in a house near New York or Boston. But what kind of company would it be? How many of the guests would have anything to say to each other? Suppose "stocks" to be ruled out, where would the topics of conversation be found? Would there be much to talk about except the size of the host's fortune, and that of some other persons present? How many of the men would wish to sit with the ladies in the evening and participate with them in conversation? Would the host attempt two such gatherings, without abandoning his efforts in disgust, selling out the whole concern, and going to Europe?

One fatal difficulty in the way of such modes of hospitality with us is the difference of social culture between our men and women. As a rule, in the European circle called "society" the men and women are interested in the same topics, and these topics are entirely outside what is called "business;" they are literary or artistic, or in some degree intellectual, or else sporting. With us such topics are left almost entirely to women. Whatever is done among us for real society is done by women. It is they, as a general rule, who have opinions about music, or the drama, or literature, or philosophy, or dress, or art. It is they who have reflected on these things, who know something and have something to say about them. It is a rare thing for husbands or sons to share in these interests. For the most part they care little about them; they go into no society but dinners, and at dinners they talk stocks and money. A meeting of women for discussion on such subjects would be a dreadful bore to them. The husband feels better employed in making money for his wife and daughters to spend seeing the sights abroad. This difference in the culture of the sexes, and in the practice of the social art, is in fact so great in some parts of the country as to make happy marriages rare or brief. It makes immense houses, with many chambers, in town or country, almost an absurdity in our present stage of progress.

Another, and the most serious reason against spending money in America in building great dwelling-houses, is, as I have already indicated, that the dwellings of leading men in every country should be in some sort of accord with the national manners. If there be what is called a "note" in American polity, it is equality of conditions, that there should neither be an immoderate display of wealth, nor of poverty, that no man should be raised so far above the generality in outward seeming as to excite either envy, hatred, or malice; that, above all things, wealth should not become an object of apprehension. We undoubtedly owe to suspicion and dislike of great wealth and displays of it, the Bryan platform, with its absurdities and its atrocities. The accumulation of great fortunes since the war, honestly it may be, but in ways mysterious or unknown to the plain man, has introduced among us the greatest of European curses—class hatred, the feeling among one large body of the community that they are being cheated or oppressed by another body. To erect "palatial abodes" is to flaunt in the faces of the poor and the unsuccessful and greedy the most conspicuous possible evidence that the owner not only has enormous amounts of money, but does not know what to do with it. We know that from the earliest times there has not been, and we know that there is not now, the smallest popular dislike to the successful man's "living like a gentleman," as the saying is, that is, with quiet comfort, and with a reasonable amount of personal attendance. But the popular gall rises when an American citizen appears, in the character of a Montmorenci, or a Noailles, or a Westminster, in a gorgeous palace, at the head of a large army of foreign lackeys. They ask themselves what does this mean? Whither are we tending? Is it possible we are about to renew on this soil, at the end of the nineteenth century, the extravagances and follies of the later Roman Empire and of the age of Louis XIV.? What it does mean, in most cases, is simply that the citizen has more money than he finds it easy to dispose of. Consequently the only thing he can think of is building a residence for himself, which, like

Versailles, shall astonish the world, if in no other way, by its cost.

All this may be said without denying in the least the great liberality of American millionnaires. What colleges, schools, museums, and charities owe to them is something new in the history of the world. They have set Europe an example in this matter which is one of the glories of America. It is a pity to have them lessen its effect or turn attention away from it, by extravagance or frivolity, the more so because there is a mode still open to them of getting rid of cumbersome money, which is untried, and is full of honest fame and endless memory. We mean the beautifying of our cities with monuments and buildings. This should really be, and, I believe, will eventually become, the American way of *displaying* wealth. Considering what our wealth is and what the burden of our taxation is, and, as shown by the Chicago Exhibition, what the capabilities of our native architecture are, the condition of our leading cities as regards monuments of sculpture or architecture, is one of the sorrowful wonders of our condition. We are enormously rich, but except one or two things, like the Boston Library and the Washington public buildings, what have we to show? Almost nothing. Ugliness from the artistic point of view is the mark of all our cities. The stranger looks through them in vain for anything but population and hotels. No arches, no great churches, no court-houses, no city halls, no statues, no tombs, no municipal splendors of any description, nothing but huge inns.

I fear, too, of this poverty we are not likely soon to be rid, owing to the character of the government. It will always, under the régime of universal suffrage, be difficult in any city to get the average tax-payer to do much for art, or to allow art, as we see in the case of the Sherman Monument, to be made anything but the expression of his own admiration for somebody. It is almost impossible to prevent monuments or buildings being jobs or caricatures, through the play of popular politics on a subject which was no more meant for its treatment by majorities than the standard of value. Governments in all European countries do much for art. They erect fine public buildings under the best artistic conditions. They endow and maintain picture-galleries and museums. In fact the cultivation of art is one of their accepted functions. Nothing of the kind is known among us. It would infuriate Populists and Bryanites to know that our Treasury was putting tens of thousands of dollars into books and paintings, or bric-à-brac, or even into art-education. An École des Beaux Arts, or National Gallery, seems to be an impossibility for us. Whatever is done for beauty in America, must, it seems, at least for a long time to come, be done by private munificence. If we are to have noble arches, or gateways, or buildings, or monuments of any description, if our cities are to have other attractions than large hotels, it is evident our rich men must be induced to use for this purpose the wealth which it seems often to puzzle them to spend. Such works would be a far more striking evidence of the owner's opulence than any private palace, would give his name a perpetuity which can never be got from a private house, and would rid him completely from the imputation of selfishness. For our experience with regard to great houses, hitherto, is that the children of the men who cause them to be built rarely wish to live in them, and often have not the means to do so. Such buildings become after their death either hotels or some kind of charitable institutions. They are in no sense memorials in men's minds of anything but somebody's folly or extravagance. All they say to coming generations, if they are not pulled down, is that So-and-so made a fortune.

In erecting public monuments a rich man would have the great advantage of doing what he pleased. If the thing were more than a building, were, for instance, an arch or a fountain, all he would have to get from the public would be permission to build, which would be seldom difficult. To obtain from a popular government large expenditure of money in a way which artists would approve, especially a government resting on a public as little instructed in art matters as ours, is likely to be for a long time to come at least almost an impossibility. Men in office are rarely experts in such matters, and if thoroughly honest, are apt to plume themselves on their economy and rigid devotion to utility, rather than on any regard for beauty. The banker in New York who refused, some time ago, to give in aid of an Academy of Design, money which might be used, he said, in setting "a young man up in the grocery business," fairly represented the state of mind of any official class which we are likely to have for a good while. Our reliance for the ornamentation of the new world must therefore be mainly on our rich men. They can choose their subject and their architect, without let or hindrance, and they have thus far shown themselves fully alive to the value of professional advice and criticism. They have, in fact, before them a wonderful opportunity, of which we trust the next generation at least will avail itself, without servile imitation of a society which is passing away in the places in which history produced it.